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Earl of Belfast

NAPLES;

POLITICAL, SOCIAL,

AND

RELIGIOUS.

BY LORD B*******

AUTHOR OF "MASTERS AND WORKMEN," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

No country I ever visited interested me so profoundly as Naples. I had long heard its inhabitants spoken of with contempt; but when I learnt fully to understand the tyranny of Church and State which has crushed them for centuries, and still crushes them, I commiserated, but could not despise a people who have frequently struggled for freedom, though their efforts have proved inadequate to cope with the overwhelming strength of priests and potentates,

who considered it their interest to keep them in slavery.

I have endeavoured in the following pages to describe some of the impressions received from a residence of several months in Naples, during which time I derived information from men who had been in prison—from others who knew the country and its inhabitants thoroughly, and from many who impatiently submitted to the existing government.

I have repeated no anecdote unless well authenticated—though I have occasionally made use of the notes of a friend, which have been placed at my disposition.

My account of the political positions of the country, is derived from private sources, and

from the published defences of the men who are themselves martyrs to the tyranny of King Ferdinand.

I have endeavoured to avoid as much as possible recurring to facts of which Mr. Gladstone, in his able pamphlet, has already spoken; but in a simple narrative of the recent events in Naples, to have been entirely silent concerning some circumstances he relates, would have been to leave this story of monstrous tyranny and persecution wilfully incomplete.

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NAPLES;

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS.

CHAPTER I.

How to go to Naples—Arrival there—Lazzaroni—Beggars—The Quay Castel Nuovo—Post Office—the Pine-nut roaster—Chevalier Bianci—Variety of Carriages—A miniature Franciscan—The King.

I SHOULD advise all strangers who visit Naples for the first time, to approach it by sea. A long journey from the Alps to the shores of Posilipo, habituates a traveller to the external signs of superstition, ignorance, and misgovernment; habit has blunted his enjoyment of the beauties of Italian scenery, and he has lost that keen

faculty of observation which usually accompanies all first impressions, before he arrives by land at the capital of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

But, above all, if he wishes to enhance by contrast the enjoyment of the many charming scenes which Naples, when the sky is bright, will daily disclose to him, let him arrive, as we did, by a steam-boat from Genoa, in a violent gale of wind. The rain fell in torrents as we approached the shore, yet all the passengers eagerly thronged the deck, to behold the land, which all expected to find the most beautiful on the face of the earth.

But the rain fell in torrents, forming a thick mist around us; the sea was wild and rough, and even the waters of the port were swollen into considerable waves by the violence of the wind. It was in vain that we endeavoured to catch a glimpse of Vesuvius, Posilipo, Capri, or any of those lovely scenes which the sketches of our artists, and the verses of our poets, together with the innumerable journals of our idlers in

Italy, had, in name at least, made as familiar to our minds as Richmond or Westminster.

But that morning we were destined to be disappointed. We saw absolutely nothing as we passed up the bay, and the first object we could distinguish was a small, inconvenient port ill defended from the storms of the Mediterranean, and surrounded on the land side by tall, irregular buildings.

Craft of every description were knocking against one another, whilst a legion of half-clad, swarthy boatmen, with woollen night-caps, were pulling, and shouting, and screaming, and swearing, in a most unintelligible language, which we had some difficulty in believing to be Italian. In fact, the Neapolitan dialect differs so widely from pure Tuscan, as to be almost entirely incomprehensible to the best Italian scholar, who is not habituated to its short, nasal sounds, and the screaming tones, in which, even by women, it is usually uttered.

Like all travellers, we had, on landing, to struggle through a crowd of Lazzaroni, and to

engage in something like a battle, to rescue our baggage from their clutches. We then had to pass the Custom House, where a handsome bribe makes all things easy.

All this occupied a considerable time, so that the rain had ceased when we were left at liberty to proceed to our hotel.

We had scarcely re-entered the street, when our adventures began. Whilst proceeding to our carriage, one of the gentlemen of our party who was walking at my side, turned suddenly round, and with a heavy stick which he carried, gave some one a tremendous blow across the back. Utterly astonished, I looked for the object of his rage, and beheld a strong, handsome young fellow, with no other clothing than a pair of linen trowsers, sculking quietly off, and rubbing his bare shoulders with a very silly air. He had his hand in my friend's pocket, though without being sufficiently adroit to get anything for his trouble but a good cudgelling. Nobody near us took any notice, and we walked on.

More than twenty Lazzaroni, with red woollen

night-caps and linen trowsers, some with a jacket hung over their shoulders by way of a cloak, and some with none, three or four with shirts, and many more without, insisted, with a maddening confusion and clamour, on carrying our three packages to our hotel; and it was with the utmost difficulty that one of my companions, who spoke their patois fluently, succeeded, between jesting and threatening, in rescuing our possessions from their care, and transferring them to the carriage that awaited us. But even that did not prevent each from demanding payment for his services. One had lifted a trunk from the ground—another had set it down again—a third would have carried it to the Hotel if we had not prevented him, and so forth; and when we had distributed a handful of small coin amongst these insatiable beggars, they still continued to follow us, screaming as they ran, that they deserved to be better paid.

We were no sooner rid of these tormentors, than half-a-dozen urchins, whose skin could

scarcely be distinguished from the filthy rags they wore, took their place; now running along the middle of the street beside our carriage, on hands and feet like wheels, now screaming "*Eccellenza*," that universal title of all strangers in Naples. "*Eccellenza*, charity! for the love of God, charity! I am dying of hunger!" was the universal chorus; and then, without relaxing their pace, they crossed their mouths with an extended thumb and finger, and pointed to their empty pockets; one of those dumb forms of speech which is the Neapolitan's second language, and which in this case signifies hunger and poverty.

Whilst this was going on, we turned from the Quay into the great street made by the present king, from the port to the Largo del Castello; a more magnificent avenue can scarcely be imagined. Directly opposite to us arose the Castle of St. Elmo; and the paved road is on one side, alone divided by an iron railing from the deep fosse of the Castel Nuovo, an ancient Spanish castle, of enormous dimensions.

A drawbridge is cast over the ditch, to one of the arched gates of the fortress. The heavy towers and massive walls, constructed in the middle ages, still stand entire; a monument, in their stern grandeur, of Spanish oppression, when the tyranny and misgovernment of these proud strangers rendered such fortifications necessary to defend them against the desperation of the outraged people they oppressed.

This gloomy fortress is rendered more imposing by the contrast of its stern and severe simplicity, with the fantastic brilliance of the scene amidst which it stands. It is at all times occupied by a considerable garrison, and is united by a vaulted passage with the palace of the king. Even in the present century, this means of escape has been more than once made use of by the reigning family, who, not less despotic than the Spaniards, have been compelled, in danger, to seek refuge in the Castel Nuovo.

This building contains the artillery school, a cannon foundry, and a large depôt of cannon;

but whether or not the strength of the fortification is commensurate with its external gloom, we are unable to decide, though it may well be supposed, that a strong-hold, erected more than five hundred years ago, would be unequal to resist the power of modern artillery, and the resources of modern science.

When we afterwards visited this building, it left a sad impression on the mind, of the barbarous severity and reckless, unfeeling tyranny with which the Neapolitan people have been ground down in abject slavery, from the time of their Spanish masters, by a long succession of tyrants. Such rule is not government, but oppression; whether exercised by foreigners, or by the despotic king of an independent monarchy.

Opposite to the castle stands the post-office. To this building, which bears externally the appearance of a handsome Italian palace, we turned our steps in quest of letters from our own dear native land; but woe betide the stranger who, deluded by its balconies and

white-washed walls, expects either cleanliness or order within.

To frank a foreign letter, he must clamber to the third story, up a staircase, to which no light ever penetrated except from some open door, or the farthing candles burning before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, on the first landing-place. And then the dirt, the water dripping down the mud-engrafted stairs, and the smells —but that is a subject on which memory loves not to dwell, for it is quite certain that however numerous may be the orange groves in the neighbourhood of Naples, their odours are not those which commonly prevail either in its streets, its courts, or its staircases.

Sometimes, as the adventurous stranger clambers through the darkness, with his letters, he catches glimpses, through open doors, of some dozen clerks sitting pen in hand in due order behind their respective desks; but it is difficult to imagine what they are all doing, for the post is perhaps the worst regulated in Europe.

No foreign letters can be posted, except on

certain days and hours, at the top of the dark staircase; and more than once, when exact to the time of opening, I have found the office still shut, and have been told, to console me for my disappointment, by a beggar lounging near the door, that if I waited only half an hour, the Signor ——— would return from his dinner!

The misfortune of those who expect to receive letters is yet more irremediable. More than one-third of the foreign epistles must go to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," for they certainly never reach the persons to whom they are addressed.

But all the annoyances and filth of this ill-conducted establishment were forgotten, when, on resuming our way, we beheld the beautiful castle of St. Elmo, with the many terraced buildings of the convent of the Chartreux and the church of St. Martin crowning the lofty rock that rose directly in front of us, behind the new palace of the Ministers of State, in the Largo di Castello, so as to form with the old towers, and wide and busy street in the fore-

ground, one of the most magnificent city views in Europe.

The rain had ceased, and a gleam of sunshine broke forth, as in a northern summer, and in an instant gave a new character to the whole scene, displaying, in all their brightness, the many colours of the motley groups amidst which our carriage was slowly making its way.

Along the eastern side of the street are low houses, little better than booths, whose wide open shops; without doors or windows, are gay with every kind of common merchandize; and theatres for the populace, with their tawdry pictures, invite the vulgar to witness their continual representations. In front of this line of buildings were tables or stalls of shells, old furniture, old clothes, books, watches, and fruit of every description, near which sat the humbler merchants on the ground with their baskets before them, screaming for customers, one against another, as the crowd flitted past them. Here an aged Lazzarone with gray, unshorn beard, and bare brown legs and breast, stood

surrounded by a crowd of his younger associates, all wild; Salvator figures, selling off cheap the remainder of a basket of strange-looking shell-fish, unknown to our northern eyes; there sat a withered crone, with her gray hair escaping in all directions from beneath the dirty, square green head-cloth that defended her bleared eyes from the sun, a very different figure from the ordinary gay representations of Italian costumes. With a half-starved, ragged child at her side, she crouched over a brazier of charcoal, in which she roasted pine-nuts for sale; a miserable means of livelihood, which it was plain, from the hollow eyes of herself and the famished child, scarcely sufficed to keep them alive. Yet the fineness of her delicate hands gave evidence that she had never learnt to work, that she had never worked; and so, in the midst of abundance, she was dying of want.

Around these poor traders were passing rich merchants on their way to the port—Dutch, French, English, and American sailors, idle loungers of every class—peasants from the

islands, in those bright, ancient costumes, which the inhabitants of the town have almost entirely laid aside for cheaper attire; and priests of every variety, from the bare-footed mendicant friar, to the rich purple-silk-stockinged Monsignore, in fine black broad cloth, wrapping his cloak with studied elegance around him and casting most expressive glances from beneath his wide-brimmed cocked hat on all fair passers-by.

We ere long arrived at the great Theatre of San Carlos, which, though externally handsome, possesses no peculiar claims to attention. We then entered the great square in front of the palace, the principal ornament of which is the church of San Francesco di Paulo, built by King Ferdinand, the grandfather of the reigning sovereign, as a consolation to his troubled conscience in his latter days, under the direction of the distinguished architect the Chevalier Bianchi, a native of Switzerland. This gentleman, in addition to other payment, received as a present from the royal bigot a monastery in the very centre of the city, in one part of which

a beer brewery and beer house are now established, whilst the remainder being let in apartments, affords him a handsome revenue.

We found the grand place between the church and the palace filled, like all other parts of the town, with a motley throng, but of a somewhat higher order than that we had seen near the port. Yet still priests and monks formed the principal feature, and mingled strangely with the gay females who, in gala attire, were hurrying to the promenade, and the lounging officers in full uniform, who, with numerous strangers, were awaiting the appearance of the king.

We being curious likewise to see this noble personage, under whose dominion we were come for awhile to abide, likewise tarried till the expected royal carriages had passed. Whilst we thus delayed, we were highly amused by the variety of vehicles, and the company therein, which thronged around. The majority were one-horsed cabriolés on four wheels, which, as their hire is small, are used by all the populace a degree above the lowest order; but the most

characteristic is the curriculo, a gaily-painted car, high raised on two enormous wheels, and drawn by one horse, whose grotesque trappings, towering in an arch above his back, would be sufficient to fatigue any ordinary animal; but it seems that Neapolitan horses are something more than ordinary animals, for we have counted fourteen men, women, and children, with numerous turkeys, fowls, and other living creatures, hanging on to one of these skeleton-looking carriages—some on the shafts, some behind, some before, and some actually under, between the wheels.

Such is Neapolitan idleness; the starving wretch will rather give his last grain, than incur the labour of walking half a league.

Ere long, came a small, close chariot, probably built more than fifty years ago, when the coachmaker's art was in its infancy in Naples. Three footmen in dingy liveries, top-boots, and cocked-hats of the same date, hung behind, whilst a meagre coachman, in similar costume, sat on the faded hammercloth, to drive two

ancient horses, who appeared as if they had utterly forgotten the taste of corn. In the inside, with all the windows up, was an enormously fat bishop, with a little velvet cap on his head, and a very red face, whilst a thin, pale clerical secretary, in black, appeared half suffocated in a corner behind this important personage.

Our attention was quickly diverted by the necessity for our coachman to make way for half-a-dozen mules, whose approach was announced by the jingling of their musical little head-bells and the cries of their drivers. Without such heralds, we should have been at a loss to decide on the nature of these animals, so entirely were they hidden in every part, save the ends of their noses and the tips of their tails, by enormous piles of hay, built on two panniers, suspended across their backs, till they had the appearance of a walking hay-stack.

In fact, these poor beasts supply even the place of scavengers' carts in Naples; and in the narrow streets, instead of a noisy, dusty waggon

interrupting the foot-passenger, he is frequently obliged to stand aside, to allow a dozen light-footed mules, with their broad and heavily-laden panniers, to pass him by. They are, however, only truly picturesque when the baskets are covered with many-coloured cloths, and on a wide pad between them sits a female peasant in male fashion, in a gay costume of scarlet, and green, and white, and her laced head-cloth hanging in square folds over her sunburnt face, whilst she nurses an infant, bound up in swaddling-clothes, till it exactly resembles an Egyptian mummy.

Whilst we were gazing with pleasure on such a group, and thinking that the accoutrements of the animal, and the dress of its rider and her child, as well as her education and habits, were all much in the same state as they might have been found four hundred years ago, we were startled by an omnibus, that jackal of steam-carriages, that emblem of a century of inventions, activity, and novelty. Within it sat three monks, with their shorn crowns and coarse

woollen gowns, two women in the costume of Ischia, all unchanged since the fourteenth century; and here they were actually going to a railroad in an omnibus! The effect is in truth most curious and striking, to see this people of the middle ages, for such is a great part of the Neapolitan population, in habits, ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, all at once, without any process of gradual national improvement, instruction, or industry, thus profiting, in the midst of slavery and barbarism, by the development of distant nations, and riding in a carriage for sixpence, which no money could have purchased for the princes of the land, when their dresses first came into fashion. And the monks looked very merry, with the dark-faced damsels at their side.

In fact, the priests are great patronizers of carriages. It is a common sight to see three fat Dominicans, with their turned-up hats and ample white serge garments, enjoying a fête-day in an open calash, and by the side of many a fair lady as she glides in her elegant equipage

along the gay Chiaja, sits her father confessor. No public conveyance can be entered without finding one of the society to be a priest; and from the bishop, with his three dirty footmen, to the begging friar in an omnibus, the fraternity may be seen in all the shades of black, brown, and white attire, riding at all hours through the streets of Naples; and yet, as foot-passengers, they absolutely swarm. We observed that morning, whilst we stood waiting to see his Majesty, that there was no moment, taken at hazard, at which we could not count fourteen in sight. The monks are mostly well-fed, vulgar, stupid-looking men, with no appearance either of talent or piety, though from time to time a noble figure, with a long white beard, may be seen in the brown frock, whose expression bespeaks higher characteristics. They are of all classes, and we quickly learnt they are of all ages, for a little Franciscan monk ere long passed us, who could not be more than four years old; unconscious of his destiny, he prattled with childish glee, as he trotted along by

the side of his mother, a washerwoman, who was carrying home a basket of clothes. We looked with an astonishment that evidently delighted her, on this first specimen we had seen of a friar in miniature; but after a longer residence, we saw several nuns as well as monks under seven years of age, whom their parents, in some fit of superstitious terror, had vowed to sacrifice, or dedicate, as they call it, to the church.

We had scarcely lost sight of this strange little figure, when the clatter of the arms of the guard before the palace, warned us of the approach of the king. Two outriders in plain liveries appeared, and then, to our disappointment, an empty carriage, of which the horses were driven four-in-hand. The spectators all stood aside, the men all raised their hats, and after vainly looking around for some minutes in search of the object of their respect, we discovered, to our astonishment, that the good-looking coachman on the box of the carriage was the king

The old queen-mother followed, with her handsome young husband at her side; but few of the people took any notice as she passed. However lax may be the conduct of the inhabitants of Naples, their moral sense is not entirely blunted. When the royal party had passed out of sight, we continued our way to our hotel, where we speedily found ourselves established in apartments that would be considered handsome, and even comfortable, either in Paris or in London. It is not in hotels, but in private houses, that the true Neapolitan modes of life are to be learnt.

CHAPTER II.

St. Lucia—The Toledo—Pickpockets—Macaroni.

WHEN, after a night's rest, we walked out at early morning into the streets of Naples, we found summer in all its glory there, shedding her sunshine over the gay and restless city. The rain of the preceding night had left no trace.

Fruits were piled in heaps in the markets, crowds had resumed their daily occupations in the streets, and fruits and flowers, and even the dirty populace, were all glowing with brilliant colours unknown in northern cities.

Sunshine, which is prosperity to a people

who live in the open air, like the lower orders in Naples, had brought thousands forth from the porticoes, and the cellars, and the caves, where they had taken refuge during the storm of the previous day. The whole city was teeming with life, and the brilliant atmosphere of the morning acted like enchantment even on ourselves.

It would be impossible to describe our sensations of delight, as we gazed around us on the transparent sea, the smoking summit of Vesuvius, the swelling acclivities, rich with vegetation where marble villas chequer the dark green foliage of the orange groves, and on the lovely islands, rising above the glittering waters of the bay.

The purity of the air, and the glory of the sun and sky, dispose a stranger to find a charm in every object, and during the first days of our residence in Naples, we were equally delighted by the confusion and noise of the streets, the external splendour of the palaces and the churches, the beauty of the gardens, and the

picturesque forms of the hills and buildings which everywhere met our view.

We forgot all we had heard of the misery in the hospitals, in the prisons and in the dwellings of the poor, and the tyranny and misgovernment with which the wretched inhabitants of this earthly Paradise have long been oppressed and degraded. The only blot we then observed upon the splendid picture was the idle bands of half-savage Lazzaroni, who lay crouching in the sun upon the quays.

We passed along the wide quay of St. Lucia, which forms a half circle at the edge of the soft waters of the Mediterranean. Above, rose the lofty promontory of Pizzofalcone; further inland, picturesque houses tower high over each other, till a royal palace and the barracks of the royal guard crown the summit.

This is one of the busiest parts of the city; it is the principal passage from the Chiaja, or west end of the town, to the quarter of the palaces and the street of the Toledo—the Oxford Street of Naples. Though many of the

houses here are only occupied by fishermen, whose nets hang suspended from the numerous balconies; yet by the side of these humble and neglected dwellings, stand noble hotels, inhabited by families and strangers of distinction. The ground floors, even in the best of these buildings, are commonly used as shops, of no very brilliant description; and a fruit and vegetable market is held before their doors, every day, and all day long.

The lower orders of the Neapolitan people, the lowest of which are the Lazzaroni, may be said absolutely to live in the open air. They cook, they eat, they sleep, and make all their bargains in the open air. On the Quay of St. Lucia, which is one of their favourite places of resort, a dozen filthy alleys pour out their nightly occupants, to add to the clamour of human voices which is there truly deafening at all hours.

We proceeded thence to the great street of Toledo, a narrow avenue, more than a mile in length, which passes through the centre of the most populous part of Naples. Here it was that we first became fully sensible of the ex-

traordinary character of the people amongst whom we had come to reside.

It is impossible to convey by language a just idea of the swarming population there for ever in movement; of the voices, and the tones, and the cries of thousands of costermongers and charlatans, of buyers, sellers, disputants, singers and beggars.

The rumble of carts and carriages of every description, which with the greatest velocity and frightful shouts cut through the crowds of people every moment, the running, struggling, pushing, and fighting, form the most extraordinary picture that can be seen in Europe.

It has been computed, that at every moment of the day, more than fifty thousand persons may be found in the Toledo, with above fifteen hundred vehicles of various kinds; coachmen, cartmen, muleteers, and pedestrians, all contributing to the incessant din; some swearing some screaming, some singing, some holding forth on the new opera, others on the last lottery, and all talking even more with their hands than with their tongues.

Even amidst this throng of passengers, every thing which can be done, under the open canopy of heaven, is going forward in this busy street. The shoemaker, the tailor and the joiner, are all there at work; the writer sits at his desk, and his employers stand beside him, dictating with the utmost gravity the secrets of their hearts, which they are unable themselves to indite; on one side, a begging monk is preaching from a stone post, with the voice of a Stentor, threatening perdition to all who neglect to give him alms; further on, a decrepit old woman is screaming out a hymn, as a penance, whilst her voice is drowned in that of a quack doctor, recommending his wares. Jugglers play their tricks—gamblers shout out the number of the game they are playing—females are stuffing mattresses, cleaning vegetables, plucking poultry, and scouring pans, all in the open way.

Some people are roasting before large fires, some are boiling and frying, some are buying, some are selling, some are fighting, some are

kissing children—these, in the public eye, are openly whipped, and combed, and dressed, and everything but washed.

Close to a hissing frying-pan of dainty fresh anchovies, a man is reading aloud, with all the vivacity and gestures of an actor, the verses of Ariosto ; and a dirty-looking monk whiningly implores the passers-by to bestow a *gran* to purchase masses for the souls of the wretches in hell fire.

I escape from them as rapidly as possible, but yet must needs pause to listen to the strange looking peasants from the Abruzzi, who are playing their mournful bagpipes under a statue of the Holy Virgin.

We had scarcely lost the sound of the bagpipe, when we heard the lively sounds of the gay tarantella, to which two Sicilian damsels were dancing, as if insensible to the shouts of the water-seller, who almost deafened us with his clamour. The water is iced, and we find it excellent, though we only pay the smallest possible coin for it.

Having satisfied our own thirst, we are not surprised at the eagerness with which we see half-a-dozen ragged urchins fighting for a piece of a water-melon, nearly as big as themselves. But they are quickly put to flight by the approach of a procession of a holy brotherhood, most frightfully disguised, who are bearing the corpse of an associate, in its coffin upon their shoulders, to be interred.

These have scarcely passed, till Punch and his travelling theatre obstructs the way; every instant you are met by a priest in black garments, or a monk in a frock and cowl, and nuns of charity glide softly through the crowd, their sombre dress contrasting strangely with the elegant ladies, whose French fashions are made Italian by the gaiety of the colours they have adopted, to please their national taste.

But suddenly a little bell is heard, and a priest, followed by incense bearers, appears, carrying the host to the dying. All the wild clamour and movement of that busy street are hushed in an instant, and that passionate, strug-

gling, eager crowd, kneels, as by one impulse, before this symbol of the divinity.

Scarcely has it passed by, when the whirl again commences, and if this pause of seeming adoration touched the hearts of any of the crowd, even for an instant, it leaves no trace behind; for all resume, as before, their disputes, their occupations, or their bargains.

Not the least busy of the motley crowd are the pickpockets, a class which abounds in Naples, and with which few men venture to interfere, especially since an assassination which occurred in the Toledo a few years ago.

Two strangers, Americans, it was said, having almost daily suffered the loss of a pocket-handkerchief during their residence in Naples, resolved to bring the thieves to justice. They agreed, in order to effect this object, that one of them should walk along the street of the Toledo with his handkerchief partly hanging from his pocket; whilst the other, a few paces behind, followed him to keep watch. Only a short time elapsed, ere a thief commenced his

operations ; but scarcely had he secured the prize, ere the second gentleman rushed forward, and seized him by the collar. The next instant a knife was plunged in the body of the American by another of the gang, who with, the prisoner, readily effected his escape, whilst the stranger fell dead to the ground.

I have heard that this story is contradicted ; every effort is made to conceal the crimes of the people, as well as the proceedings of the government, from the knowledge of strangers and the public ; but I have been positively assured by an inhabitant of the city, that it was the subject of law proceedings, and one of the many causes why pickpockets continue to pursue their calling with such audacious impunity, in spite of the efforts that have recently been made by the government to punish them by transportation to the islands of Tremiti. In fact, in every department men shut their eyes to a multitude of sins in this city of idleness, and poverty, and vice.

The Toledo has no side flags for foot-pas-

sengers; but, like most of the streets in Naples, is paved with large flat stones, that admirably supply their place. On all *fête* days, which in a Roman Catholic country very frequently occur, it is a place of parade, where the wives of the citizens of the middle classes go to display their finery; and really on such an occasion, no stranger could doubt that Naples was one of the richest capitals in Europe. But it is all vanity and outside show. Everybody is well and gaily dressed; and though the taste in female attire is somewhat more gaudy than that of a Parisian belle, where, individually considered, the general effect is brilliant and amusing to the passer-by, it is a more melancholy spectacle, when he learns, after a longer residence, how much of honour, and honesty, and right feeling, have been sacrificed by many, to make this flitting display, and how many deprivations have been endured to indulge this ruinous vanity. Such weakness, it is too much to be regretted, is in other countries, as well as Naples, one of the baneful effects of the progress of luxury, though

in more industrious and richer lands it can generally be more easily gratified than here, where foreign manufactures are extravagantly dear, and salaries and private incomes very small.

The prettiest objects in the Toledo are the stalls of the lemonade sellers, and even in winter, there are many of these little wooden temples, where iced water, or iced lemonade, can be purchased for a halfpenny. The table, covered with glasses, is surmounted by a wooden triumphal arch, painted of every colour, and gaily adorned with boughs of laurel and myrtle, interspersed with flowers and paper banners of gold, and blue, and scarlet, whilst oranges and lemons are festooned around it, in every form and fashion. And such fruit! lemons the size of a pint bottle, and oranges the circumference of an ordinary turnip. At the opposite corner of the street stands a cook in his white apron, jacket, and night-cap, shovelling up huge masses of snake-like macaroni, which he is boiling in a large cauldron, over a brazier of glowing char-

coal, and calling aloud for customers to consume his merchandize whilst it is yet hot. Behind him is a black and greasy deal table, in a narrow lane, with a couple of plates and forks, for those who accept his invitation; whilst more in the background yawns a filthy den, called an eating-house, without windows or door, where, to our astonishment, three smart-looking young clerks, a soldier, and a well-dressed middle-aged gentleman, were sitting on rude benches, at the fixed deal tables, dropping the smoking macaroni adroitly into their mouths, with no other assistance than their fingers. A Neapolitan would never think of breaking it, were it a mile long, but lets it gently fall down his throat, without the labour of using his teeth.

An instance came under our knowledge, of a poor man swallowing six pounds of macaroni at a sitting; yet to foreigners it appears exceedingly indigestible, in the half-raw state in which it is eaten by all the natives of Naples.

Pickled peppers, salted tomatas, anchovies, grapes and figs, dried upon sticks, are at every

corner, ready to supply the wants of the poor, and yet the *gran* that suffices to purchase them is often difficult to be obtained.

The street of the Toledo is also the scene of all *fêtes* and processions, when the windows in long line are hung with carpets, curtains, and tapestry, and females in holiday garments throng the balconies, and add to the gaiety and brilliance of the scene. During the days of the carnival, it is here where the masks assemble in carriages and on foot; and here, in sad contrast to these scenes of pleasure, in all times of revolutionary disturbances, the Lazzaroni have held their menacing and tumultuous assemblies.

In every rebellion, when the military have succeeded in clearing the Toledo and the Mercato, or great market-place, there is little difficulty in mastering the insurgents in the less important and narrower streets of the city.

CHAPTER III.

Tne Mercato—Cardinal Ruffo—A begging Monk—The Museum—The library of San Philippo Neri—The Suburb—St. Gennaro Capo di Monte—The Cemetery—Funerals of rich and poor.

ANXIOUS to visit the most remarkable objects in Naples, we proceeded, soon after our arrival, to the great market-place, called the Mercato, once the scene of Masaniello's triumphs. Here, also, was the bloody tribunal of Cardinal Ruffo held, during the first revolution in Naples. But of that we shall speak more fully in another place.

Yet on the day we visited the Mercato, it presented as gay, and busy, and joyous a scene,

as if human blood had never flowed on its pavement.

The sun was shining brightly on the old picturesque houses around—on piles of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables—on the white head-cloths of the women, and the gay colours of the various costumes, which from all the neighbourhood of Naples had assembled in that vast square. A thousand cries filled the air, and it might have been supposed, from the wild vehemence of word and action which accompanied every petty bargain, that the interests of the world were in debate.

Nothing amused us more, than the baby belonging to a female peasant who was selling fruit. As tightly bound up in swaddling-clothes as an Egyptian mummy, there was nothing human visible about it except its head, nor could it give any sign of life except by squalling. Quite as solid as a block of wood, it was handed from one woman to another, like an old doll, without arms, or legs, or petticoats. When its mother was engaged in providing us with a

pound of grapes, we discovered, from its squalls, that it was deposited in a basket of cabbages, but totally incapable of motion: there was no danger of its tumbling anywhere.

Our attention was next attracted by the figure of a Calabrian; his waistcoat was embroidered with gold, a dark mantle was flung picturesquely over his arm, a pointed cap was drawn down over his dark eyebrows, his tight breeches were fastened with glittering buckles, and leggings of buffalo's hide covered his legs above his ancient sandals. A gay-coloured scarf was tied around his waist, in which stuck a dagger and a pistol, and a gun was slung across his shoulders. His beard was long, his skin sunburnt, and the gloomy expression of his countenance, and his manly bearing, gave us the idea that he well knew how to hit his mark, when excited, either by necessity, or the desire of vengeance, or of gold.

Near this threatening figure stood a peasant of the Abruzzi, in rude goat's-skin and miserable sandals, poor, simple, and superstitious, talking

to a smart peasant from the Terra di Lavore, whose jacket fluttered with ribands, and who carried weapons in his girdle and on his shoulder. Then came a careless, merry fisherman in linen jacket and trousers, then a woman from Amalfi, and a cheese-merchant from Resina; a butter woman from Gioja, with a gay embroidered apron, and falling veil; a girl in the fantastic half Turkish dress of Badessa, merchants of macaroni, and an oil merchant from Beneventum, with his cart drawn by buffaloes. There were coachmen, and soldiers, lazzaroni, and monks; white Dominicans, brown Capucines, and black Carthusians. Such a market we have nowhere else beheld. It would be impossible to describe all the southern fruits which were piled up in profusion around, or the splendid vegetables of every description which had attained perfection with little assistance from the gardeners' art. The most beautiful poultry, game, and fish, were there in abundance; and cheeses as large as mill-wheels, or small and round ones, called Cacio Cavallo, were piled up in heaps. The strange

shell-fish of the Mediterranean most particularly attracted our attention.

Amidst the wild confusion of voices, disputing about buying and selling, a stupid-looking monk stood furiously shaking an alms-box, and calling on the passers-by to give him something, for the good of the souls in purgatory, whose ambassador he represented himself to be.

The sun was shining with burning intensity of heat upon him, and when he had performed his task, he wiped his streaming forehead, and began to talk about the commonest things in the world, till religious zeal again inspired him.

We continued our way through a labyrinth of narrow and dirty streets, towards the quarter of the town lying beyond the termination of the street of the Toledo. The high houses almost constantly exclude the rays of the sun from these dismal and dirty avenues; but this, which we at first thought an imperfection, we soon discovered to be a great advantage in so hot a climate. We passed numerous churches and

monasteries, and at length reached the front of the Royal Museum. Here, during the dominion of the French, all the scattered remains of antiquity were brought from different palaces, to form one splendid collection. Here are to be seen some of the finest statues of antiquity, and the cabinet of vases is the most remarkable in Europe.

The library contains more than a hundred and fifty thousand works, and a thousand manuscripts. In one room the process of unrolling the writings on papyrus, found in Pompeii and Herculaneum, is carried on. It is a work of extreme difficulty, as they are all charred, and fall to pieces on the slightest touch.

There is no collection of antiquities in the world so interesting as the collection of articles found in Pompeii, which is here preserved.

The variety is endless, and the forms and drawings of even the meanest utensils of common life are so graceful, that we are struck with admiration at such an evidence of the universal sense of beauty which must have existed amongst

a people, who required even the articles in their kitchens to be designed with taste.

Leaving these treasures of art, we continued our way through a part of the town less frequented and more poorly inhabited than any we had yet seen. We then visited the cathedral and the church of St. Filippo Neri. Both of these buildings are adorned with fine pictures by Perugino, Rafael, Spagnoletto, Guido, and Domenichino.

In the library attached to St. Filippo Neri are more than two hundred volumes. A little trembling old monk gave us admission, with his rusty keys, into the silent halls. We found only two other visitors there, little miserable Romish priests, with three-cornered hats, who, like ourselves, had not come to study.

We afterwards found every other public library which we visited in Naples was equally empty and neglected. Collections, which contain nearly a million of books, are rarely entered except by strangers; and these great and costly foundations, a rich inheritance from a wiser age, seem

now absolutely useless; for why should men take the trouble to acquire knowledge, or to investigate truth, when their promulgation is punished by captivity or death?

There are moments when the spectacle of tyranny and slavery, hypocrisy, superstition, and degradation, make the soul weary of man and his works, and anxious to look once more on a wide, fair landscape, where the freshness and purity of nature are uncorrupted by the vices and passions of humanity.

The polluted market-place, the countless churches, and dreary libraries we had visited that morning, had put us exactly in such a humour; and we issued forth from the narrow streets, resolved to investigate no more of the city that day, but to enjoy, in the setting sun, the wide prospect from the Capo di Monte, one of the hills which form an amphitheatre at the back of Naples.

But we had still a long and miserable suburb to pass through, where we observed that the shops and houses of the poor exactly resemble,

except in height, the ancient dwellings at Pompeii.

A wide, arched door, for ever open, admits both light and air into these dirty, vaulted dens, and fully displays all the family arrangements, or the merchandize within. A picture of the Virgin and Child is never wanting in wine-house, shop, or dwelling, recalling forcibly to mind the household gods of the ancients. A little lamp is every evening lighted in the poorest habitation before this image of the protectress, to whom all female prayers are addressed.

In the suburbs and villages around the city, almost every house is painted with horrible representations of purgatory, so various, that it might be supposed that Dante's description of the infernal regions was a real article of belief; but, indeed, hell fire plays a very considerable part in their religion.

Melons hung in strings beneath the windows to ripen, form a more agreeable decoration; and we were amused by seeing chickens and turkeys appear on different balconies, as if they were

the favoured inhabitants of every story of the lofty buildings.

On quitting this poor neighbourhood we found ourselves suddenly in the midst of a wide road which leads over a fine bridge near the convent of St. Gennaro, to which is joined an hospital for poor men and women, now commonly used by noble families as an asylum for their old and worn-out domestics, for whom they would otherwise have to provide. In fact, there is no charitable institution here that is not shamefully abused or perverted.

Here, also, is the entrance to the catacombs, which are excavated in many stories to an unknown depth in the mountain, and are said to have passages leading out, near Pazzuoli.

In these caverns, from which the Phœnicians and the Greeks drew materials for the construction of the first city on the site of Naples, deep hidden in the bowels of the earth, the early Christians celebrated their sacred rites. In countless niches the bones of the pious still repose, whilst in other parts the remains of the

dwellings can be traced. Now, all is desolation and escaping as soon as possible from the stifling air of these gloomy vaults, we returned with delight to the enchanting scene above ground, which appeared to us on our return more beautiful than before.

Winding our way up the hill, we reached the beautiful palace of Capo di Monte; but as every object of art has been removed to the Museum, we did not enter it, but passing its charming pleasure grounds, we continued our enchanting drive amidst fig plantations, festooned with trailing vines, and groves where the orange, and the lemon, and the datura mingled with the feathery pepper tree, clustered round the tall stone pine, whose deep green foliage, darkly defined against the brilliant sky, awakens dreams of eastern lands. But none can be more beautiful than the prospect that opened to our view when we reached the brow of the mountain. For the first time, since our arrival on this gifted shore, we forgot the superstition, the ignorance, and

the demoralization of the degraded inhabitants of this misgoverned paradise, as we gazed on the scene before us, where sea, and air, and earth's richest productions, seemed to vie with each other to produce a second Eden. Even the fourth element, fire, contributes to complete the enchantment; and Vesuvius, that day without a cloud, but with a light canopy of smoke, at times illumined by flashes of flame from the crater, formed one of the most beautiful, and certainly one of the most marvellous features of the landscape. Huge aloes stretched their giant arms from the hedges, thickly clustered cactus crept over every wall and bank, and the dark ilex and waving palm, all reminded us that we were on the shores of the Mediterranean, even had we not beheld its mirror-like waters glittering amongst the islands far beneath us. The villas dispersed amongst the vineyards, with their flat-roofed, unequal buildings, are always picturesque, and have the complete character of those which enliven the landscapes of Poussin and of Claude. Even the cottages of the pea-

sants and vine-dressers are in the same style, and produce a charming effect when seen from a distance, though on a nearer inspection the stranger is disgusted by their dirt and ruin. Both in winter and summer children may be seen running absolutely naked before the doors, and pigs, poultry, and goats are all inmates of the same chamber. Windows and chimneys there are none; and if a hole in the wall gives admission to the light, it is never glazed. A wooden shutter is closed in winter when the nights are cold, but in all seasons the greatest part of the household offices are performed on an open terrace, which usually forms part of every dwelling.

The same beautiful view was still before us as from Capo di Monte, when we reached the new cemetery on the slope of the long range of hills, opposite to which arises Vesuvius in all its glory, whilst the heights above Castel a Mare and Sorrento close a view where the eye wanders from the bright waves of the Mediterranean over the gardens of Portici and Pompeii's ancient walls.

For those who have ever indulged the fancy of resting after death in a spot where Nature is lavish of her beauty, a more enchanting place of repose could not be chosen than this new and extensive burying-ground. Constructed in the manner of Père la Chaise, at Paris, the terraced gardens are already thickly studded with tombs, variously decorated by sculpture and architecture of every form and variety, whilst the golden sun, shining winter and summer over the clustering flowers, robs even the grave of its solemnity, in spite of the weeping loves and mourning angels, whose white and spotless marble may be seen at intervals gleaming between the broad leaves of the datura and the myrtles. Such are the graves of the privileged, for whom money can purchase six feet of this sacred soil; and there are chapels where masses can be said for their souls, and a small monastery is in progress of erection, where twelve monks are perpetually to reside, to perform such services for those who have left money to pay for them. Families of yet higher distinction have been permitted to

purchase, for their own use, separate chapels and vaults in the great square attached to the church of the cemetery, on the summit of the hill. There are a hundred and two of these chapels, and to each is attached a vault. A certain number of them have likewise been purchased by the fourteen fraternities, or associations of trades, into which the city of Naples is divided.

These societies somewhat resemble the clubs of working men in England, only that they are under the entire direction of the priests of the church to which they belong, and each fraternity is in this manner attached to one of the fourteen principal churches in the city, so that they are the slaves of the clergy. Every member must pay a certain weekly sum, by which, after a short lapse of time, he is entitled, in case of sickness, or old age, or incapacity to labour, to receive the assistance of a regular allowance, and funeral rites and masses for his soul when he dies, in proportion to his contribution.

There are still traces of similar institutions to be found in Venice and in Florence, and their origin was evidently in the middle ages. A certain number of the brethren of the fraternity walk at every brother's funeral, carrying a burning taper, and clothed in a shapeless white linen garment from head to foot, with two holes left for the eyes, to direct the mourner's footsteps as he follows the corpse. In addition to these strange figures, the poor brothers of the Hospital of St. Gennaro likewise walk in such processions, bearing crosses, or banners. To each of these men is paid a carline, or fourpence, of which they are only allowed to retain one gran, or about a halfpenny for their own use; the rest goes to the establishment. It is supposed that about three hundred of these poor creatures are daily employed to play the part of hired mourners.

With such attendants, the coffin is carried by some of the brotherhood on their shoulders. It is gaily painted and decorated, and left open, so as fully to display the body of the deceased,

which is uncovered, and decked out in holiday garments.

In such a procession, we saw the dead shaken about in the most revolting manner, without any one, excepting ourselves, being shocked by such an exhibition. No relation or friend accompanied the corpse. The Neapolitans consider that the living have no concern with the dead, and, relieved of all care concerning their interment, leave their bodies, when they have been members of one of the fraternities, to be carried to the church of the society, where the funeral service is performed with open doors, whilst the ghastly figures of the brethren, in their white garments, stand around the coffin, in the dim light of waxen tapers, and chaunt, in sonorous responses, to the voice of the priest, who, unseen behind the altar, reads the service for the dead. The corpse is afterwards carried at dusk to its allotted place in the cemetery, or preserved in the church, to be displayed at the *fête* of the dead.

In another division of this burying-ground,

is the rotting-place of the poor. It is a large, gloomy, paved square, surrounded by walls and low buildings, in one part of which the bodies of those whose friends can pay for such accomdation, repose for awhile, to avoid the danger of their being interred alive; a circumstance which is not unlikely to occur, in consequence of the brief time allowed by the law to elapse between death and the removal of the corpse from the habitation of the living. In the ancient cemetery there were three hundred and sixty-five vaults prepared for the reception of the bodies of the poor, one of which was daily opened throughout the year. In the paved court of the new establishment there are only fifty-two, and each is open for a week in succession.

A short time after our arrival, we witnessed two funerals in Naples. The first was that of a noble lady, the wife of a minister, who was said to be a good woman—an excellent woman —for she had given away all her money for charity, into the hands of the priests, and left

her own family in absolute destitution. Though such cases are far from uncommon, the clergy spare no pains to do honour to the memory of their generous benefactors. On this occasion, the church of St. Ferdinand was so filled with priests, that it was impossible to enter, but we saw from without that it was splendidly illuminated for the service over the body. When this was concluded, several superb equipages, and a regimental band, commenced the procession to the cemetery; then above a thousand monks came forth, two and two, from the church, into the twilight street, each carrying a burning taper, as they preceded the body of the lady, on its gilded hearse, and chaunting at intervals as they passed up the Toledo, amidst the dense crowd that had assembled to gaze upon the spectacle.

The same evening, when with such splendid honours the body of this old woman was laid in the vault of her family, a man entered the burying-ground of the poor, like a porter with a basket on his back, and jerking the naked body of a female into the common receptacle for the

dead, he turned and went his way. Another and another followed, till, at length, when there were no more poor creatures to inter, a priest muttered one service for all whose wretched lives had found so fearful a termination, and the hole was closed for the evening.

It is said that the population of Naples amounts to about four hundred and fifty thousand, and that the ordinary average of deaths is forty a day. This winter, from the more than usual misery which prevails, they have more than doubled that number; so that, at the end of the week, the public graves have been nearly full. Quick lime is then scattered over this mass of uncoffined dead, and the cover of the vault is cemented down, to remain closed till the end of another year, when it is again to receive, for seven days, the same melancholy tribute.

All the human affections of the lower classes are thus swallowed up and destroyed. No poor man can shed a tear over the grave of his wife, or his children; death, or rather man, yet more

wretched dwelling beneath. He demanded the cause, and was told by a poor neighbour, in reply, that the woman wept because she was unable to pay a priest to say the burial-service above the corpse of her boy. Pitying the poor bereft creature, he instantly gave the sum necessary, which amounted to no more than about one shilling and four-pence, English money; and, with some curiosity, he awaited to see what would ensue.

About half an hour afterwards, a priest entered the lane in which the villa stood, and approached the open door of the widow's dwelling, where the uncoffined corpse still rested on the bed. But he entered not—he only stood before the door—muttered the accustomed prayers, and performed the ordinary routine of crossings and genuflections, in the most hurried and careless manner, and then departed. A brief time elapsed before a peasant appeared with a basket on his back, and he likewise stopped before the door. The body of the dead was then brought out, rolled in a coarse cloth, too short

to cover the feet; it was cast into the pannier; the man raised it on his shoulders, and again went his way. And this was the funeral of the poor widow's only son.

CHAPTER IV.

A visit to Pompeii—Manufacturing of Macaroni—Portici —Insecurity of the position of Naples—Foreign activity—Industry—State of the population—Theatre of Herculaneum—Pompeii—State of the ruins—Mosaic —Ancient and modern robberies — Farm-house— Dinner—Wine—View in the twilight—Storm, and return to the city.

Our next expedition was to Pompeii. Instead of taking advantage of the railroad, we followed the ancient way, which, after passing along the whole of that part of the city which skirts the sea to the east of the port, crosses the bridge of La Madelena over the small river Sebeto. The enormous cavalry barrack is the most remarkable object in the mean suburbs, which

continue for a considerable distance to skirt the road. The manufacture of macaroni is carried on with great activity in this neighbourhood, and it is curious to see immense quantities of it, hung over poles and drying in the sun, by the way-side, exposed to all the dust of the very dusty road. But, to a Neapolitan, dirt is a thing of no moment.

Mingled with the miserable dwellings and poor shops that skirted the way as we proceeded, were numerous palaces and villas of lofty and elegant proportions, through the open porches of which we often caught views of lovely gardens, and verdant orange groves, that extended nearly to the margin of the sea; and though these charming buildings are frequently deserted and uninhabited, their white walls and balconies are gay in the winter sun.

The royal Palace of Portici is of the same cheerful character, and from its terraced gardens there is a view over the bay, which is perhaps without a rival in beauty. The public road thither, from the city, is wide and noble,

and so perpetually thronged with carriages of every possible description, as to impress our minds, more than anything we had yet seen, with a sense of the immense population by which we were surrounded. Strange to say, this busy thoroughfare passes through one of the courts and under the apartments of the palace, whose extensive buildings are alone united by a suite of rooms that are built like a bridge above the road.

Here, for a long time, were preserved the treasures dug out from Herculaneum and Pompeii, which, to the stranger who beholds Vesuvius still casting forth smoke and flames, and frequently sprinkling ashes over the village and palace, appears an act of extraordinary audacity; for who can say, that a catastrophe similar to that which buried these cities two thousand years ago, may not, in an hour, again occur? In fact, in consequence of such an apprehension, these Roman relics have been transferred to the Royal Museum at Naples. But, even there, it appears as if they were

scarcely secure. The feeling is involuntary as we tread over this volcanic and mutable land, that the capital, with all its beautiful buildings and numerous inhabitants, with all its pleasures, and its crimes, and its miseries, may in one day be destroyed like the many ancient cities of its neighbourhood which have vanished from the face of the earth!—and it is impossible to look on Vesuvius without the terror that Naples may be destined likewise to perish, either by a sudden inundation of the sea, an overwhelming flood of lava, or one of those fearful earthquakes, the traces of which are visible over the whole land.

The nearer we approach the base of Vesuvius, the more profound becomes the feeling of such a danger. Nothing, in fact can be more awful, or more sublime in their desolation, than the desert fields of hardened lava, which extend down from the crater into the very middle of the orange groves and vineyards of Torre dell' Annunziata. When we remember that their grey, arid, uneven surface, was once a flood of moving

fire, beneath which the rich fruits of the earth and the dwellings of man were in a few brief hours annihilated, the heart sickens with the sense of the ungovernable power of Nature. Yet though the palaces of the rich in this dangerous neighbourhood are generally forsaken, the poor absolutely swarm in all the villages along the base of the mountain; and there is here more appearance of industry, activity, and trade, than in any other part of the environs of Naples. Both French and English have, in fact, established iron works in and near Portici; and, at a little village a short distance beyond Pompeii, a Swiss company has, for several years, carried on a cotton-mill, for the fabric of the gay handkerchiefs universally in use among the lower order of Neapolitan females. There is likewise a trade in oranges, and the wines of Vesuvius are in high repute. Nevertheless, even here, in the midst of abundance and smiling plenty, it is a painful fact, that there exists a mass of misery which would be frightful in any other land. But the Neapolitans can live on that on which

any other people would starve, for their bright climate supplies the want of house and fire, and almost clothing. They sleep in the sun, and if they can obtain a few grans for the bare necessaries of life, they will rarely work, nor are they troubled by any anxious thoughts for the morrow. The whole road actually swarmed with beggars. If you carried a sack of coin it would not suffice for the thousands of miserable wretches who besiege you with their clamour, and make a spectacle of their infirmities; wherever you go, you are sure to be thus surrounded; in the streets of the city, in the country, and above all, in the churches. The crippled, the blind, the maimed and diseased, are permitted to throng the temples of the Divinity, and to pursue the devotee or the stranger to the very foot of the altar, with their importunate petitions for charity; whilst the priests, in garments of lace, fine linen, and precious embroidery, pass them by as if blind to their misery, and deaf to their petitions. The children have absolutely nothing else to do than to

beg, and everywhere follow the stranger, by dozens, with the same mournful whine. But though the poverty is frightful and real, we soon found that it was impossible to give alms to one or two, without drawing on ourselves the almost distracting pursuit of a crowd of clamorous, miserable wretches, who seem obstinately determined to take no denial. Nor is it to the lowest ranks that beggary is confined; it has been said, no man in Naples is too proud to beg, few are too noble to steal. To cheat is the universal profession.

The people are in general far from handsome. The lazzaroni, or lowest order, are neither strong nor finely formed, and though their women have all large black eyes, their other features are plain and uninteresting. Nothing made us feel so fully their utter want of morality and respect for all the common decencies of life, as the abominable oaths to which, on the slightest provocation, they give utterance. All idea of modesty appears utterly unknown to these poor creatures, and the vilest

expressions are familiar words upon their lips, and awaken no blushes on the cheeks of their hearers.

Though the forms of the buildings are picturesque, and the vines trailing over stone arcades and external staircases, give an air of elegance to the meanest cottage; there is a dirt and desolation in the village streets, which it is painful to behold. There is evidently no sense of order either amongst the people or their governors; there is no desire of progress, no wish to excel; individuals and the nation are content to stand still amidst their dirt, their rags, their poverty, and their ignorance. They have no shame, no love of decency, and even a great number of the women, it should seem, are so degraded, as to have lost the mere attention to personal appearance which is natural to the sex. Nothing progresses save the priests; more especially the Jesuits, who every day add to their numbers and their power.

When we reached the village of Resina, we descended by a narrow stair, into the ancient

theatre of Herculaneum, excavated amidst a bed of solid lava, A.D. 1738. But though the whole proportions of this vast building have been distinctly laid open, the subterranean passages through which the visitor is conducted by torch-light, convey no feeling of their original uses to the mind. We admire the skill and perseverance with which the excavations have been made, when told that one part was the stage, and another the orchestra, and a third the gallery, where thousands of spectators were seated, when the great irruption, which A.D. 79 buried the theatre and all within its walls under a mass of burning stones, from whence, as from a mould, the equestrian statues of the Balbi and many other beautiful objects of art have been drawn forth during the last hundred years. Yet, though we looked with wonder on the height and extent of these labyrinthian caverns, we left them without any very clear idea of the ancient building or its former occupants.

An hour later, when we stood on the summit

of the walls of Pompeii, and gazed over its vast extent of paved streets and columned forums, and temples, and shops, and houses, all nearly perfect, even in colour, save that the envious roofs are no longer there to conceal the private recesses of these Roman dwellings from all prying eyes, we felt at once transported to another world. The whole place seemed instinct with life, and we almost fancied we beheld the shadowy figures of its ancient inhabitants, flitting as in days of old, through the unaltered scene of their ambition and toil. The effect is like that of enchantment, and every step the stranger advances amidst the city, increases his wonder and admiration.

The coloured stucco on the walls; the graceful figures which, painted in medallions, ornament the chambers; the mosaic fountains, with their pillars and alcoves of many-coloured stones; the pictured floors of brilliant marbles, are all fresh as if created yesterday by living men! not ruined, but incomplete. Yet where are they who have left these beautiful relics of their

talents and their industry? where are they who took pride, or pleasure in erecting these luxurious abodes? Where are the poor, the tracks of whose cart-wheels are still upon the street; the labourers, whose half-finished task of chiselled stone lies by the public way? They rejoiced to escape the destruction of their lost city, yet they crumbled into dust and were forgotten nearly eighteen hundred years ago, whilst the homes, and the treasures they lamented, are restored at the end of this long lapse of time, in all their freshness and their beauty, to the wondering eyes of a distant generation.

Nothing we can read can make us so well acquainted with the habits and real daily life of the ancient Romans, as one day's ramble in Pompeii, and a careful investigation of the Royal Museum, where the objects taken thence are preserved. Nothing can make us feel so strongly that they were men and women like ourselves. In many points, it is probable that their habits greatly resembled those of the Neapolitans of the present day. The shops are

constructed exactly in the same manner as many of those in the modern city, especially the wine-shops. In one remarkable respect the architecture of the dwelling-houses is also the same; the greatest difference between the ancient and modern abodes seems to be the elevation of many stories above each other. There are few stairs in Pompeii. Many articles of domestic use are imitations of those found in the ancient city; but still there are many objects to be found in Naples at the present time, where a likeness exists without this being the case; a likeness probably derived from the long-transmitted habits of antiquity, or consequent to the nature of the climate. Several kinds of bread are still made precisely of the same form as those discovered in Pompeii; the bottles in daily use have the same rotundity of form as the ancient; the braziers for charcoal, and many kitchen utensils, remain entirely unchanged, which may likewise be said of the rouge-pots of the ladies, and the tight-skirted dresses worn by the peasants in the neighbourhood of Fondi,

the outline of which exactly resembles many of the figures on the ancient vases.

Under the direction of the late Chevalier Bianchi, the architect to the king, many of the most beautiful and perishable buildings have been partially covered in, so as to defend them from the destructive effects of weather, from which they were preserved during nearly two thousand years, by the ashes which apparently destroyed them.

Many persons regret that the extraordinary works of ancient art and furniture have not been left, where found, in the houses of the excavated city, so as clearly to illustrate the habits of society during the period to which they belonged. But it must not be forgotten, that the mountain by which they were originally covered is still near, and in full activity. The fine mosaic of Alexander, now in the Museum at Naples, an extraordinary work of ancient art, in which the figures are admirably drawn, and full of movement, energy, and expression, was for some time left to adorn the house where it

was found; but whilst there, it was within a short period three times covered with the ashes of Vesuvius, and its removal was absolutely necessary to insure its preservation.

Yet it must be regretted that one dwelling, at least, has not been made as perfect as recent discoveries permit. This might easily be done without a sacrifice, as the bronzes, marbles, and other articles of furniture recently dug out, are generally only repetitions of those already in the Museum.

The street of graves, with its beautiful marble monuments, remains entire; the house of Diomed, with its little courts, and rooms, and wine-cellar; the villa of Cicero, gates, streets, wells, manufactories, and shops, all seem as if only a few years had passed away since their inhabitants had deserted them.

We see there the print of the wine-cups on the bench, the friendly *salve*, speaking welcome as from the grave, to those who pass the threshold of the houses; we see the cool bath-rooms, the garden, and the chambers around it, and with

deep feelings of awe we enter the houses once the dwellings of Sallust and Polybius.

The Forum, the Odeon, the Amphitheatre, and innumerable temples, are all laid open, and strange are the feelings with which we call to mind, as we gaze upon them, the eighteen hundred years of misery, strife, and barbarism which have passed since these objects, in all the fresh beauty of a greater and more civilized age, were suddenly concealed from human eyes.

Though the king has purchased the whole of the land, now vineyards, which covers the ancient city within the walls, the excavations are carried on slowly, and it is well that something will thus be left for succeeding generations to discover, for to those who have known Pompeii for the last twenty years, it is sad to observe the fading and perishing of those coloured walls, whose hues were so bright when first laid open. The air is rapidly destroying that which the ashes and light pumice-stone of Vesuvius preserved in perfect brightness for nearly eighteen hundred years.

It has been clearly ascertained that many objects of value were removed shortly after the first irruption that covered the city, either by the inhabitants themselves, or by robbers. Holes are found broken in the walls between different chambers; and where this is the case, no objects of value are ever discovered.

The sale of any of the treasures of Pompeii is strictly forbidden by the government, as it is desired that all should be placed in the Museum; but there is no doubt that peculations to a very considerable amount are carried on. There is a certain curiosity shop in Naples, where specimens of the rarest and most valuable objects from the buried city may be purchased by those in whom the dealer can place confidence. We ourselves saw silver mirrors, and precious vases, and golden relics of undoubted antiquity, brought forth for our inspection from their secret hiding-places, and heard enough of the dealer's connections to be induced to think there must be connivance in some very high quarter, or such a trade could not be carried on

without the interference of the police, whose numerous spies it is impossible it should escape.

When the day began to close in, and we were tired of exploring the wonders of this city of the dead, we mounted to the level of the still unexcavated ground, and turned our steps amidst the thickly-clustered vineyards to a farm-house, where a repast was prepared for us. Aloes grew thick by the side of the road, and we passed along by a hedge of roses still in full flower, ere we arrived at our resting-place. It was a flat-roofed, irregular building, the lower part of which was occupied by the farmer's family. One high coach-house-like door afforded both light and air to the principal dwelling-room, before which, two handsome maidens, in true Italian costumes, were sitting spinning with the distaff. An external stone staircase, with several turnings, conducted to a paved uncovered terrace on the first story, from whence, on one side, opened a kitchen, and on the other a large chamber, where a table was placed for our repast.

The good people of the farm acted as cooks, and it afforded us some amusement, though it increased our hunger, to inspect the preparation of the national dish of macaroni, and the admirable ragout which usually accompanies it, on the charcoal fire in the vaulted kitchen. But when an enormous bowl was placed before us, containing at least a couple of pounds of this favourite food, with a rich brown sauce of tomata, which might have excited the envy even of Ude the prince of cooks, the prospect was yet more cheering. Our viands were seasoned by the excellent wine of Vesuvius, in an enormous bottle containing at least three quarts, whilst our dessert consisted of superb bunches of purple grapes, cut from heavily-laden branches, that were festooned in *guirlands* around the room. And though in good truth they were the only ornaments it contained, though the walls were rudely white-washed, and the floor of dirty bricks—though our uncovered deal-table had probably never enjoyed the advantage of water or of brush, the whole scene was so novel,

so pictorial, and, to a fanciful mind, so romantic, that we would not have exchanged that rustic repast and our peasant attendants for all the luxuries of a court.

A new pleasure awaited us when our meal was over, and we went out on the terrace and gazed over the blue mountains that skirt the Mediterranean, beyond Castell a Mare, the dark sea tinged with the red rays of the departed sun, and Pompeii tranquil as a place of tombs, amidst the lovely landscape, whilst from Vesuvius, its evil genius, the internal flames diffused ever and anon a glimmering lustre over the smoke that hung above its crater, and to which the deepening gloom of twilight lent a double brightness. The demon seemed struggling to escape, to blast again the Paradise before us. The scene was one of matchless beauty, yet of awful solemnity.

All the way as we returned that dark evening to Naples, the flames continued to glimmer and flash above the mountain; a loud and boisterous wind swept over the bay, and bore its waters

before it, to break in huge, wild waves upon the shore. We felt as if our slight carriage could scarcely resist the blast. As we approached the city, the thunder rolled in one long, loud reverberation, and the lightning, by its perpetual flashes, made our way visible to us through the unlighted suburbs, whilst savage-looking figures of half-clothed fishermen flitted continually past us, hurrying to draw their boats up higher on the shore, so as to save them from the fury of the sea.

Vesuvius, like the necromancer who presided over this wild commotion, grew ever brighter and brighter as the tempest deepened the darkness of the night. Torrents of rain speedily began to fall over the city, and at the same moment that a tremendous peal of thunder rolled above the Castle of St. Elmo, the fury of the blast burst open many of the doors in the Opera House of San Carlos, and filled it with a cloud of dust, whilst the audience, in terror of an earthquake, sprang from their seats, and a scene of universal confusion ensued.

Such are Naples and its environs, beautiful on the verge of desolation; enchanting on the brink of destruction, which menaces them daily; till the danger at times makes itself felt with awful solemnity, even by the most unthinking of the careless inhabitants.

CHAPTER V.

The population of Naples—Pleasant life—The heat—Cause of idleness—Want of principle amongst the people—Carriages and ice—Mode of passing time—Want of pride—Silent language—An execution.

NAPLES is divided into twelve districts, containing about four hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Of these, at least forty thousand are houseless beggars and idlers. It may, indeed, be said to be the land of idleness.

No where in the world can time be more agreeably beguiled; no where is there more to see and hear, or to content an aimless curiosity. All is pleasure, noise, life, movement, and clamour.

A showy taste, gay colours, and trumpery ornaments, characterise the architecture of palaces and houses. The most miserable booths are decked out with gold and silver paper.

Private equipages and hired carriages are equally remarkable for gaudy hues and showy, though tarnished liveries; and the handsome Neapolitan horses are adorned with feathers, bells, and fringes.

The meanest stalls flutter with flags and streamers, and on every public festival the windows of half the city are festooned with carpets, counterpanes, and curtains.

Every where the vivacity of the inhabitants of this southern city excites our astonishment, and in the wild enjoyment of momentary pleasure, they seem equally to forget the sufferings of the past, and all anxiety for the future. Until passion is aroused, everything of importance is here treated with levity. Art, instead of ennobling life, is made subservient to pleasure; in spite of the sufferings attendant on the recent revolutions, and the present despotism of the

king, the great mass of the people still think reflection folly, and make enjoyment the sole aim of life.

But though the careless existence of a Neapolitan seems as bright as his own cloudless skies, no dependence can be placed upon his fickle nature. There is no solidity in his character; nothing firm, nothing to be relied upon. His humour changes with every new impression. Trifles throw him into convulsions of excitement, quickly followed by weariness and exhaustion. Trifles have roused him at times to resent oppression which has been long borne with indifference. His feelings, his language, and his whole conduct, undisciplined by education, are as wild, fickle, and energetic, as the nature by which he is surrounded.

We saw many vices and abuses in Naples, which gave us at first a most unfavourable impression of the people; but by experience, we became convinced, that though in general they may not possess some of the sterling qualities which we respect in northern nations, yet that

they have been calumniated by superficial observers, and though degraded by long misgovernment, their character is not naturally bad.

The great and wealthy are, as in every country, with rare exceptions, frivolous and spoilt by indulgence, ease, and idleness. Yet though without deep feeling or extensive knowledge, they are simple, unaffected, and without the pride of our northern nobility.

The middle classes are, without exception, friendly and good-humoured, but ignorant, narrow-minded, and superstitious.

Honesty seems the virtue least recognised and practised in all the various classes of society; cheating and deception being no disgrace. Many men pride themselves on their skill in both, and the cheated is only laughed at as a helpless fool, and finds neither sympathy nor commiseration. Promises are interpreted at discretion, and are never considered binding; and even written engagements are, if possible, evaded, or made the subject of a lawsuit.

The common people are unscrupulous thieves, and delight in deceit; they are dirty, superstitious, and lazy, yet gay, good-humoured, and full of enthusiasm; and though passionate and revengeful, yet less brutal and debauched than the dregs of other great European cities.

Foreigners who criticise the character of the Neapolitans, should never forget that during the summer months, Fahrenheit's thermometer rises to above a hundred in the shade, and that all business is necessarily suspended, from ten o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon. In such a state of the atmosphere people can do little but sleep, and that not pleasantly; though the air may occasionally be refreshed by thunderstorms, it is only in the evening that the inhabitants are awakened and revived by the breezes from the sea.

In fact, Naples is the kingdom of the sun, and during the summer months, the lethargy of all physical and moral strength appears to be a law of existence. This is evident in every department of political and social life. It is

the cause why idleness is regarded as the greatest blessing; and why labour of the body, as well as of the mind, is universally dreaded and avoided. A Neapolitan workman requires eight days to do the work an Englishman would finish in eight hours; and the poorest of the lazzaroni will give his last coin to ride the distance of half a mile, to escape the trouble of going it on foot.

Carriages and ice are the two most necessary articles in summer; and you hardly hear another speech, excepting "Oh, how hot it is!"

The cafés, the places where ice is sold, the theatres, and the promenades, are the paradise of the Neapolitans. Houses of public resort are crowded from the earliest hours of the morning with persons of every class. Men and women, officers, monks, and artists, there chatter, eat ice, fan themselves with huge fans, or, stretching and yawning, read over the contents of an old newspaper, whilst the shoe-black comes and brushes their boots as they recline at ease. After such a morning, they hail with delight

the hour of dinner, which is generally eaten at noon.

No matter whether it is served with a table-cloth or without one; whether there is nothing but macaroni, prepared with stewed beef, tomatas, and plenty of garlic, the only dish at many tables, or only a salad and dried fish; with much or little, they are gay and contented, and enjoy with delight the siesta which follows their meal. They live long, for they eat moderately, work little, and sleep much. They only awaken from their afternoon slumbers when the heat of the day is past, and the evening breeze is blowing.

Then begin, for the Neapolitans, the true hours of enjoyment. The Chiaja, the Villa-Reale, and the Molo become crowded. Walkers, riders, and equipages in thousands throng the streets. The crowd is so dense, that coachmen are compelled, however unwillingly, to go at a foot's pace. Yet occasionally a strange-looking vehicle, with high wheels, and hung round with more than a dozen passengers of low degree,

dashes like lightning through the crowd, to the certain destruction, it might be supposed, of all who obstruct the way. But the long whip is cracked, the driver shouts with all his might, and the people laughingly fly in every direction, and not the slighest accident occurs, for the fellow knows that should any one receive an injury, he would be sent to the galleys for life, and the owner of the carriage would be heavily fined.

When the sun has set, the cafés, eating-houses, and all places of public entertainment are again filled; fans flutter, music and singing resound on every side; dancing commences to the monotonous tones of the tarentella, and everybody chatters, laughs, jokes, screams, and enjoys himself.

This goes on till after midnight, and it is near dawn before the houses of entertainment are empty.

Such is a rough sketch of the daily life of thousands in Naples, where, in the highest as in the lowest ranks, dirt and finery, idleness and

pleasure, superstition and roguery, intelligence and ignorance, servility, fraud, and impudence, are all mingled together in the strangest and most grotesque confusion.

No people in the world surpass the Neapolitans in quickness of comprehension, keen wit, and vivid imagination; but untrained, or ill-directed, these faculties are made subservient to intrigue, frivolity, deceit, and superstition.

The upper and middle classes derive all their little knowledge from French literature. Modern Italian authors are the objects of their ridicule and contempt; and the profound thinkers of England and Germany are beyond their comprehension.

Music alone obtains universal encouragement, and the national taste being here left entirely without restraint, the love of this charming art has become a perfect passion with the Neapolitans.

The beauties of nature, the luxurious softness of the climate, the volatile gaiety, and wild feelings of this southern people, all by turn find a

voice in the works of their composers, most widely differing from the learned productions of German musicians, who unjustly condemn the music of a people, with whose tastes, and habits, and passions they are unable to sympathise.

Music is cultivated in countless academies. The whole people participates in the triumph of a composer, or of a favourite singer. The Opera is the resort of all the best society in Naples. Opera-boxes replace the luxury of a drawing-room to the Neapolitan ladies; indeed, in the theatre of San Carlos, they are really used as reception-rooms. Visits are paid there; there eating, drinking, flirting, conversation, and card-playing go on in a little room behind, during great part of the evening, and these amusements are only interrupted when some favourite performer is on the stage, or some beautiful passage of the music demands attention.

During such a pause you might hear a fly hum amongst an audience of five thousand people; so profound is the silence, and so deep

the appreciation of high art. The listeners to an opera care nothing for the story nor the spectacle; they have heard and seen them fifty times; but they luxuriate in the best parts of the music; it is their passion and their delight, and they pay the highest honours to its professors.

But in all other arts, especially in mechanics, the Neapolitans are sadly deficient. They possess neither the commonest knowledge nor the most ordinary instruments; commerce, manufactories, and the military service are all in the hands of foreigners. Agriculture is equally neglected. We hear of no experimental farmers or capitalists endeavouring, by a large expenditure, to multiply the productions of the soil. The lands of the nobility are chiefly managed by agents, who enrich themselves at the expense of their masters.

If the earth were not so rich and fertile, that the mere scratching of a stick suffices to make it productive of plenteous harvests, the peasants might die of hunger, for the plough is

still a rude wooden instrument, probably little altered from that which was in use before the time of Roman dominion.

The vineyards are luxuriant, and the grapes delicious, yet the vintage is carelessly and dirtily managed; the wine-presses as uncouth and barbarous as the wooden ploughshares, and the wine, with rare exceptions, too bad to be made an article of export.

Little is felt in Naples of that strong distinction of classes, and of that submissive behaviour of the lower orders to which we are accustomed. The highest princes and dukes treat the half-naked lazzaroni, who possesses nothing but a pair of linen trowsers, a shirt, and a red cap, as if he were their equal, and expect him to behave towards them in the same way. Even servants address their masters in a tone of equality.

The intrusive familiarity of the lower orders is at times, therefore, disagreeable and unwelcome; but should the stranger, under such circumstances, lose patience, the man he re-

proves will become for ever his enemy. But if, on the contrary, we treat these unsophisticated beings with cordiality, if we indulge their peculiarities and sympathize with their habits and feelings, they will prove themselves the truest and most devoted creatures upon earth; and as they value us only for that which we have been to them, they will go through fire and water to serve us.

On the other hand, there is nothing provokes them more, than the cold, proud, and reserved manner with which Englishmen usually treat them; and they take a keen pleasure in revenging themselves, by cheating and ridiculing them in every possible manner.

These capricious sons of Nature are better understood by the Germans, who adapt themselves easily to their humour, and are therefore less exposed to be ill-treated by them.

Another contradiction in this strange people is, that, with all their habitual loquacity, there is no possibility at times of getting a word out of them. The same Neapolitan, who one while

chatters with vehemence, and throws his body into every possible attitude to assist the expression of his words, is so taciturn at another time, that it is impossible to wring an answer from his lips.

We asked an old woman who was selling fruit, at the corner of the market, if she had any figs. She gave no answer. We repeated the question; in vain. We asked her a third time, and got no reply; when, losing patience, we turned away, with an expression of displeasure.

The rage of the old woman then broke loose.

"By Heaven and the Madonna!" she cried, "have I not told you, you fool, three times, that I have no figs, and now you scold me?"

It was explained to us, that the old woman had answered "no," to our first question, by slowly moving her fore-finger to and fro before her nose; to the second she had replied by a certain movement of the tongue; and to the third, by casting her head back to express a

negative. But all this had been to us unintelligible.

The religion of the Neapolitans is a strange combination of ancient and modern superstitions. The Virgin Mary has replaced the Venus of the Romans. Not even a Roman Catholic from a northern nation, unless intimately acquainted with the females of the middle classes here, can form an idea of the utter prostration of their intellect before the authority of their priests, and of the abjectness and absurdity of their belief. They practise charms with implicit faith in their efficacy, the heathen custom of votive offerings, the adoration of images, and the use of counter-charms and amulets. Little strips of silk, or coloured paper, with an appeal to the Holy Virgin printed on them ; bits of ebony and ivory, engraved with the mark of the cross or a sacred name, are frequently given by fair hands to protect a stranger from the dangers of walking through the city by night.

Yet with all this there is little true piety ; to go to church—to repeat Latin prayers whilst

thinking of something else — to listen to the sacred music—to look on a lighted altar, and the picture of a favourite saint—to kiss some relic—to believe in church miracles—to fulfil vows made in hours of anxiety and suffering, and, above all, to obey a confessor, and give offerings to the priests, are here considered religion.

No bold investigator of truth has ever ventured, in Naples, to dispute the tenets of the Church of Rome. The Inquisition, therefore, was never introduced into the country, nor has any heretic perished at the stake.

Such a religion has necessarily little moral influence on its followers, and the laws of heaven appear to be forgotten in the observance of forms, and the existence of the Divinity obscured by the images of saints, subserviency of priests, and the splendour of church ceremonies.

I have little doubt devotees adore the Creator when they kneel to pray in the churches; but, left ignorant of His laws, their conduct in

life is the mere result of impulse and of passion.

The bright fancy of the Neapolitans, and their general want of serious reflection, make them delight in shows and festivals of every description, which afford amusement for the passing moment; all that is glittering, and bright and beautiful, throws them into ecstasies of pleasure; but there is nothing cruel to be found in their sports.

Giving way to a violent burst of passion, they utter furious expressions, but cases of stabbing are much more rare than in Rome; and nothing can be recorded in Naples, similar to the brutal annals of low London life we may read in every weekly paper.

Even the punishment of death is of rare occurrence; and when an execution does occur, it is performed in a simple manner, free from all brutality, and unnecessary horror or cruelty.

One occurred some years ago, before the public mind had been sated by the perpetual political persecutions of recent years, and totally

unconnected with any political feeling, and belonging to the usual customs of the country. We shall recount the circumstances attending it, as an illustration.

During the night a red scaffold was erected in the Mercato, on which a guillotine was placed. A neighbouring porch had been arranged for what is called a death-chapel, in which the condemned was to be religiously prepared for his final journey.

At early morning he was brought out of the neighbouring prison of the Vicaria, in a closed vehicle, to this chapel, where two priests, celebrated converters of unrepentant sinners, earnestly endeavoured, by entreaties, and the most awful menaces of eternal punishment, to induce him freely to confess his sins and receive the communion; which he resolutely refused to do.

Noon arrived, and the labours of the zealous priests were still in vain. The people at length began to be restless, and to express their pity for the poor fellow, whose state of anguish and suspense was thus prolonged, without any

good being effected for his soul; when suddenly a cry arose, that he "had taken it." He had received the Holy Sacrament.

Immediately afterwards the culprit issued from his dungeon, and his whole form and countenance were expressive of the most remarkable firmness, patience, and decision.

He was a young Calabrian; long years of imprisonment in a dungeon, whilst his tedious prosecution was going forward, had not been able to destroy the traces of his noble and manly beauty. He looked pale, but firm and self-possessed, and with his flashing dark eyes he cast friendly glances upon the crowd around him. After a long detention in the dungeons of the Vicario, death must be rather a welcome release than a punishment to the prisoner.

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" was uttered on all sides of us, as he calmly, and with unwavering steps, advanced towards the scaffold.

All around beggars were offering the printed history of the culprit for half a gran, and others sold for the same price an account of the ex-

ecution, which had been printed the previous day. But it was even more disgusting, to see monks and associates of the Holy Brotherhoods pushing about amongst the crowd, with their clattering alms-boxes, demanding contributions for the soul of the poor culprit, whilst he, whose soul they offered to release from purgatory, was passing on beside them to the scaffold, heedless of the crowds who were assembled to stare at him, and evidently without the slightest fear of death.

The story of his crime was somewhat extraordinary; and though now condemned to expiate it on the scaffold, it would have made him a hero in ancient days.

Cola Calzato was the son of the proprietor of a vineyard in Calabria. In early youth he was remarkable for his imaginative and affectionate disposition, and had formed a romantic attachment to Raffaelle Monzi, one of his boyish companions. A long separation, as they grew to manhood, seemed only to strengthen their friendship. Raffaelle had become a soldier, and soon

after his return home married a young girl who was a distant relative of his friend Cola. He had been married several years, when he began to suspect that he was no longer the object of his wife's attachment. He watched her, and had soon good reason to be convinced that he was betrayed by a certain Fra Bartolomeo, of the order of the Capucines, who was alike the confessor of himself and his faithless wife. The poor fellow long kept this painful discovery secret, but at last the weight of his sorrow became insupportable, and he sought relief by confiding it to his friend.

"I will revenge you," was Cola's reply; "you may rely upon me;" and not another word was exchanged between them on the subject.

The following night Raffaelle set off on a journey to .Reggio, and left his wife for several days. Cola, the brave Calabrian, kept watch after his departure; and when, on the following morning, the priest appeared upon the threshold of his friend's house, where he had

passed the night, he shot him dead upon the spot.

The dead body was found with Cola standing quietly beside it; he was arrested, bound, carried to Naples, and finally condemned.

By the law of Naples it is necessary that a criminal should confess before he is condemned to death. Cola had confessed, and yet his sufferings in the horrible dungeons of the Vicaria were prolonged for four years. Rafaelle was never more seen, and his wife was dead before Cola was brought to execution.

With a joyful expression the unfortunate prisoner ascended the scaffold, and calmly looked around upon the assembled multitude. The two Dominicans, to whom he had recently confessed, for he would not suffer a Capucine to approach him, assisted him up the steps, and to place his head upon the block. The cord was loosened—the flashing iron fell—and the head was severed from the body.

In an instant the axe was cleaned, the head concealed in a sack, and the executioner dis-

appeared. The guillotine was with the utmost celerity removed, and the whole awful scene was concluded.

All that remained was a little drop of blood upon the freshly-scattered sand, in which women and children of the lower order eagerly dipped rags and handkerchiefs, to be used as amulets against sickness or ill luck.

No one ever heard a word uttered against Fra Bartolomeo, whose vice had been the cause of such misfortunes; but many feel in Naples, though none dare to express it, the baneful influence produced in families, and on society at large, by a countless multitude of men, condemned by the church to celibacy, and yet brought into constant association with women, by the duties of their holy profession.

CHAPTER VI.

The Place San Carlos — The beautiful view — The Chiaja — The Promenade — Fishermen—Misery of the people—Pozzuolo—Clergy; their negligence—Temple of Jupiter—Cuma—Fusaro—Baija.

On our way to the Chiaja and the Villa Reale, the principal promenades in Naples, we again passed over the wide place called the Place de San Carlos, on one side of which stands the palace of the king.

The celebrated theatre of San Carlos adjoins the palace, and the low buildings of the arsenal little impeded the view, as we advanced towards the Castel Nuovo, which terminates a sharp promontory towards the west.

The beautiful bay lay before us, bordered by the picturesque city, with its many spires and towers, its castles, its palaces, its convents and its prisons; and the waters of the bay glittering in the sun, reflected the smoking summit of Vesuvius and the bright chain of villages which gleam through the blue distance, till Sorrento, the birth-place of Tasso, terminates the amphitheatre towards the south.

Opposite to us rose the islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida; Epomea and Nisida extended to the right, secluded retreats now inhabited by simple peasants, who lead an innocent and laborious life, where Roman tyrants once indulged in all the vices and luxuries of a corrupt age.

The Castel Nuovo is the strongest of the Neapolitan fortifications, and since it was rent from the main land by an earthquake, can only be approached along a narrow causeway.

It was here that the Emperor Romulus Augustulus perished in prison, and the abandoned Queen Joanna was judged to death for

the murder of her youthful husband, Andrea II. Her ruined palace still stands at some distance along the sea-shore towards the point of Posilipo, the promontory which terminates the bay of Naples on the north-west side, not far from the place once occupied by the famous gardens of Lucullus.

We gazed around with astonishment and delight. From Vesuvius arose a column of smoke into the clear blue heaven, where it spread round like the branches of a palm-tree from their stem; a thousand vessels were on the glittering sea, many of which were of a rigging unknown in northern seas; traders and steamers were crossing the bay in every direction, and the purity of the sky and the bright colours of the water added a charm to the whole scene, which no language can describe.

When we turned to pursue our way, the Villa Reale, the most beautiful public promenade in the world, was before us; its shadowed walks extending along the very verge

of the sea. Here are five long avenues of acacias and evergreen oaks, mingled with beds of flowers, aloes, orange trees, oleanders and countless plants of southern growth, interspersed with marble fountains and statues.

But no object of art is so well adapted to the place as the bust of Tasso, which seems o gaze, from the little temple where it stands, with longing affection towards the opposite shore of his native Sorrento.

These gardens are bounded towards the land by the street called the Chiaja, formed by a splendid row of palaces, fronting the sea, for a mile long.

Though the buildings are irregular, and none can bear a comparison with the noble marble piles of Genoa in point of architecture, yet the white walls, the large proportions of the houses, the broad fine pavement of large square blocks of lava and the luxuriant garden, which alone divides it from the sea, render it one of the finest streets in the world.

The noble buildings on one side, the marble

statues gleaming through the leaves on the other, the gay equipages, even of royalty, flashing along in pursuit of pleasure, the military band which plays at stated times in the gardens, and the crowds of elegantly-dressed women of all nations who throng the walks, present a scene from which all trace of misery or care is banished.

It is true that it is a universal custom in Italy to drive after sunset in order to see and be seen, to breathe the cool air of the evening, and shake off the lethargy of the siesta; but no where is the promenade so brilliant as here, in sight of the beautiful bay and its islands.

In a fine summer's evening there are usually more than a thousand equipages to be seen here, as many horsemen, and perhaps ten times as many persons on foot. Every where people are nodding, and laughing, and exchanging salutations. Fans, ribands and shawls are fluttering on all sides; light zephyrs waft freshness from the rocks of Capri, and the line of carriages moves on unbroken for miles along

the new road of the Mergellina and up the hill, where we are shown the remains of the school of Virgil, to return by the same way after night has closed in. Then in the summer evening the gardens of the Villa Reale are lighted up; and some years ago an orchestra, formed by the blind children of the Foundling Hospital, enchanted the ear with delicious music.

All the gay society of Naples then assembled there; parties were formed under the trees for conversation, intrigues and refreshments, whilst others floated in the moonlight over the tranquil sea, and the sound of guitars and happy voices were heard afar off over the waves, as if an echo of the sounds of pleasure, which murmured along the shore.

Yet, strange to say, some summers ago when these festivities seemed to draw all the youth of Naples within their enchanted circle of exquisite enjoyment, some wretched being or some body of men, with whose passions or interests this manner of public amusement is supposed to have jarred, at once destroyed its charm and

its illusion by the commission of a most fearful and malicious crime.

One glorious evening, in the midst of the songs and gaiety of this brilliant assembly, when all, save pleasure, seemed forgotten, the cry of death was suddenly raised amongst the astonished crowd. By some unknown means the garments of a lady were in flames.

The terror excited by such a spectacle was universal. The females, unknowing what evil to dread, fled on every side in consternation, and the gardens were speedily deserted. Not many days after this alarming occurrence, a young bride, whilst walking with her husband in the street of the Toledo, was suddenly discovered to be on fire. Her screams for assistance were fearful; no one had presence of mind to extinguish the flames, and there, in the sight of thousands of passengers, was this unfortunate creature burnt to death. Another case occurred, in which the arm of the husband was terribly burnt in endeavouring to extinguish the flames of his wife's attire; this came before the

public tribunals, but the means by which the fire was communicated, and the persons by whom these diabolical acts were committed, remain still involved in mystery. Whatever might be the object in view, a temporary gloom was thrown over the votaries of pleasure in the city; but though many stories are in circulation as to the authors of these diabolical acts, they are too little substantiated to be worthy of repetition.

As we advanced beyond the gardens, the magnificence of the Chiaja gradually melted away. The tall white houses were still to be seen, but no longer the residence of princes; they were inhabited by the lowest and most miserable of the people. In the buildings towards Posilipo dwell numbers of washerwomen, who dry their linen on the shore, and fishermen, whose boats lie opposite their doors.

Here may be seen in the sun, the young mother half clothed in the most squalid rags, her uncovered and dishevelled black hair gathered in wild confusion round her head, sitting

on a broken chair suckling her swaddled infant, whilst three or four nearly naked children are grovelling in the dirt around. The unmarried girls lounge about the whole day long with bare feet or only wooden slippers, turning their spindles, and begging, as well as the old women and children, of every respectable passenger. The men, true lazzaroni, half clothed in sackcloth trousers, and brown or red night-caps, stand together in clusters, conversing with an earnestness and animation of countenance, worthy of a senate.

Throughout the whole population of Naples, there is a language of signs, which in many instances renders words unnecessary, and when understood and put in practice by a stranger, frequently saves him from serious impositions, by at once convincing these people that he is aware of their tricks; for it is quite certain, that in whatever he may have dealings with them, their first attempt will be to cheat or to deceive him, if there is anything to be gained by deception.

To a by-stander, it is truly amusing to ob-

serve the expressive looks and gestures of these poor creatures, without shoes or stockings, and not half covered with their filthy garments, discoursing with a fluency, ease and grace, which the finest actor would be rejoiced to attain. By nature they are gay and jocose; and we often observed the fathers, when their boats were drawn on shore, nursing their little children with the tenderest care. But misery and the pressure of continual want blunt the edge of the best affections; and we were told by a native of the city, scarcely a degree above this class, that if a poor man was reduced to the necessity of being taken to an hospital, even in a dying state, none of his children or relatives troubled themselves to make any further inquiries concerning him; and when I expressed my surprise and horror at such heartless conduct, he coolly replied, "Ah, the rich are no better here; what can you expect of the poor? They have enough to do to think of themselves."

In the present state of Naples, the average

gains of the fishermen and lowest class are not more than five grans, or twopence-halfpenny a day, and with this they have a family to feed and clothe—no, we cannot conscientiously say clothe—hang with rags is a more fit expression. Their houses are dens, in which filth of every kind seems amassed, and cocks and hens are always to be seen hopping about the wretched beds. During the rainy season, their only fire is a brazier of charcoal, over which the half-clothed women cower, trembling together, with their naked, purple and swollen feet raised on a kind of grate, above the embers.

But the weather is still brilliant, and when the sun shines, the richly-laden stalls of fruit, the melons hanging around the windows to ripen, and the beautiful flowers exposed for sale, mingling their rich hues with the bright colours of the handkerchiefs and shawls which cover the heads of the better class of women, contribute to throw a picturesque beauty over the squalid scene. In fact, almost every group is a subject for an artist; the carts rude, heavy,

and grotesque, as in the early ages; the goats, with their long, shaggy hair and jingling bells, driven into the city to be milked, the female merchants of cotton handkerchiefs, with their many-coloured burthens on their heads, are all subjects to be placed in the foreground of the picture; yet under all this, the spectacle of the misery of the inhabitants of that part of the town was so painful, that we ever passed it with reluctance, and rejoiced when we left it to approach the grotto of Posilipo.

A lofty chapel, with images and burning lamps, half built, half excavated in the rock, sanctifies the entrance of this subterranean passage, which was cut by the ancients for a distance of about three quarters of a mile through the hill of Posilipo, and subsequently greatly enlarged by the Spanish viceroy, Peter of Toledo. The reputed tomb of Virgil stands on the left hand high amongst the rocks, but our attention was quickly diverted thence by the cries that echoed through the passage, into which we soon afterwards entered. The clatter of the carts

and carriages over the lava pavement, and the clamour of their drivers, as now on one side, now on another, they drive on without any rule or order through the darkness, which is only faintly broken at long intervals by a few miserable lamps, had a wild and strange effect.

On emerging from the further end of this tunnel, the road leads over a vine-covered plain, direct to the town of Pozzuolo. The sea is on the left, with the beautiful little island of Nicida, rendered famous by the death of Portia; the mountains of the Solfatara, a complete region of sulphur, on the right, and the cape of Miseno, and the far-famed coast of Baja in the distance. On both sides the land is covered with the vine, trained from tree to tree with that luxuriant beauty which the poets have delighted to celebrate; crops of the lupine, the common food of horses, are sown beneath, and the soil is here rich and light; yet, as far as the eye can reach, the whole country has an air of neglected desolation, which presses heavily upon the mind. Huge melancholy-looking rushes cover the stag-

nant ditches, the houses, heavily built of stone, are half ruined and forlorn, and the wretched inhabitants, whom we saw from time to time hoeing the fields under the vines, appeared victims of disease and penury. A *malaria* everywhere prevails, and even the wines of this district are considered to be highly prejudicial to the nervous system.

At the top of a slight eminence stands the mighty Roman gateway, which still gives entrance to the once splendid city of Pozzuolo, now a wretched village. Its extensive commerce, lovely position and charming climate, made it a favourite with the wealthy Romans, the ruins of whose villas are scattered over the surrounding hills; the fall of the empire and the devastations of war commenced its ruin, which was completed by the volcanic irruptions and earthquakes of the sixteenth century.

The former grandeur of the city may be estimated by the colossal remains of its temples and amphitheatre and the vast extent of subterranean sepulchres which have been discovered

in the neighbouring farms and vineyards. Numbers of lamps are frequently turned up by the shovel or the hoe of the peasant, and a burial-ground has very recently been discovered in the direction of the Solfatara. On the road from Puzzuolo to the alum-works within the burnt-out crater of the ancient volcano, is a small vineyard held by a certain Don Diègo Treija, the descendent of an old Spanish noble family, long established in the neighbouring town. They still retain a proud remembrance of their hereditary honours; and an aunt of the family, a withered, ragged old woman, who looked as if water had not approached her skin for the last half century, with infinite dignity informed one of our friends of her lofty descent, and added, that she esteemed it more honourable for such a distinguished family to cultivate the land, than to beg. We warmly approved of her sentiments, in which, however, it was soon shown her relatives were far from participating; for her nephew, whilst he let the party out of the farm-yard, did not lose such a good oppor-

tunity for begging, and petitioned, in the true Neapolitan style of mendicity, for a bottle of wine, as a reward for his trouble.

Long before we reached the gate of the town, we were surrounded by a crowd of men and children, all eager to force their services upon us as guides, or to sell some little object of real or pretended antiquity, which they carried as an excuse for extracting money. This is the greatest drawback to the pleasure of visiting the ruins or scenery around Naples. Wherever you go, some two or three ragged wretches attach themselves to you, to show a curiosity, or point out a road; and if you accept their services, and pay them three times the ordinary wages of the country, they are never content. Once, at the foot of Vesuvius, we saw an English lady and gentleman surrounded by twenty of these half-famished creatures, when half-a-dozen would have sufficed for their service. Crowds have no other means of existence than the uncertain tribute thus obtained. The stranger in Naples appears to be considered as an object whom

every one has the privilege to plunder and cheat to the utmost of their power.

When we entered Pozzuolo, there was a perfect battle amongst our ragged escort, as to who should conduct us to the various objects of antiquity; and it is well for the stranger, if he escape without half-a-dozen, who clamour and shriek at one another, as to their respective rights, for at least a quarter of an hour, before any progress can be made. The market-place of the town, from the earliest dawn of day, is crowded with fruit-sellers and idlers. Nobody seems to do anything but talk and gesticulate. Priests, fishermen, peasants, children and women are there lounging and talking, morning, noon and night. Everybody except the priests looks poor, and yet nobody seems to do anything, except those behind the fruit-stalls, who are roasting chesnuts, or the girls turning their spindles. The greatest part of the population here, as in Naples, evidently pass their days in the street; and their houses are such filthy dens, it is no wonder they are glad to escape from

them into the open air. The women wash, and cook, and clean their children in the public eye, whilst the men lounge about, with their red or brown nightcaps on their heads, and their jackets hung on their shoulders, without even taking the trouble to insert their arms in the sleeves. In rainy weather they are defended by a sack open on one side, the angle of which forms a kind of hood, by which this rude habiliment hangs suspended from their head. Diseased eyes is a common malady of these wretched beings, whom suffering renders prematurely old; and to those who take any interest in the welfare of their fellow-creatures, it is a most painful spectacle to behold them thus degraded, and destitute of everything which tends either to diminish the physical sufferings or ameliorate the moral condition of man. In health, and youth, and fine weather, they are gay and light of heart, but when these, or the means of gaining a scanty livelihood, fail, there is no provision for the poor—no charitable clergy, or higher class, near to succour or console. They

die as they have lived, unpitied and unassisted, and they are thrown into a hole, as we have already witnessed, uncoffined, by dozens together, to rot and be forgotten.

And this is in a Christian land, a professedly religious land, where Catholic ministers absolutely swarm; yet though they draw a rich subsistence thence, and are daily appropriating more and more of the property of the kingdom, not only by their open exactions, but by the rich legacies of devotees, who are wrought on to make the Jesuits their heirs to the ruin of their relatives, what return do they make to the people, save to encourage them in their idleness and their delusions, and the ignorance which is their destruction? What can we think of a body of men who, with such a vast power in their hands as the clergy possess in the kingdom of Naples, and professing themselves the servants of Heaven, yet make no use of their authority for the benefit of their fellow-creatures, but rather strive, by every means in their power, to prevent the progress of know-

ledge, which, from time to time, breaks in from more enlightened countries, through the barriers of superstition, they consider it their sole business to defend? If they would only preach cleanliness to their flocks, they would confer on them an inestimable obligation, and save them from incalculable disease and suffering. But no Father Matthew has yet arisen here, who cares more for the welfare of his people than his own individual ease, or the power of the order to which he belongs.

The Temple of Jupiter Serapis is the most interesting remains of antiquity at Pozzuolo. The whole of its enormous foundations and its surrounding walls, to a certain height, remain entire, as well as the forty-two chambers and baths once appropriated to the use of the priests. But though these are curious, they possess little beauty, and the eye turns with pleasure to the enormous pillars of Cipollino marble, some fallen and broken, others still standing, spotless and majestic, like a monument to attest the grandeur and the beauty of all which lies buried

around. Their solemn effect is greatly heightened by the bright reflections of the building in the water, which, like a mirror, fills the whole of its area, save where divided by the narrow paths along the stone-work of the foundations, and an elevated platform in the centre, supposed to have been the floor of the Temple. Here is still visible a small gutter, for the escape of the blood of the victim from the altar.

The pavement of all the rest of the area within the walls, visible through the transparent water, is at least twenty feet beneath the level of the surrounding ground. The earth that filled the Temple was first removed A.D. 1750, when the whole building, with its statues, vases, and pillars, was almost entire; but it is now dismantled and sinking fast to decay. The mineral waters alone, to which it first probably owed its origin, remain unchanged, and are still in as high repute for their salutary qualifications, as in the days of the Romans.

An immense amphitheatre crowns the summit of the hill behind the Temple of Serapis. Its

massive walls of brick were once probably entirely encrusted with marble, but the ruins of ages, and the changes produced by earthquakes, which have rent the building from top to bottom at the great entrance of the Emperors, had for many ages entirely filled up the centre area, and raised the ground on every side to an equality with the highest part of its walls.

There has long been a chapel dedicated to the martyrs who perished on its arena, near the entrance of the great gallery that led to the places of the spectators, on the first tier of the theatre; but it is only within a short period that such excavations have been made as to expose the form of this vast erection fully to view, and discover the profound and massively-built vaults under the arena, for the wild beasts, which were raised thence through trap-doors, at the time appointed for some wretched human being to be exposed to their fury.

The heart shudders whilst we tread the scene of these barbarous pastimes. However magnificent the buildings where they were exhibited,

however noble the audience they were intended to delight, it cannot be doubted that the society, of which all classes found pleasure in gazing on the last helpless struggle of a fellow-creature in the fangs of the half-famished monsters of the desert, must have been utterly corrupted in heart and mind. No luxury of decoration, or splendour of architecture, can cast a veil over such enormities.

The upper seats of the theatre must, in former days, have commanded an enchanting view over the Gulf of Baiæ and its beautifully-varied shores; above all, when the sinking sun cast its rays from behind the island of Ischia, over the luxuriant gardens and terraced palaces that clothed the undulating hills. But not only the fair erections of man have now vanished, but Nature, as if impatient of the slow progress of time, and eager to obliterate all traces of those who had polluted the loveliest of her scenes by cruelties the most barbarous, and luxury the most vicious, has, by frequent and fearful convulsions, changed the very forms of the earth

and the qualities of the soil. Palaces, temples and amphitheatres have been shaken from their foundations, and whole villages and their inhabitants swallowed up by earthquakes, whilst the sea, bursting from its boundaries, engulfed the works of the proud emperors, who had vainly sought to subjugate its might. One day it mirrored their splendour, the next it swept over their ruins! The broken arches near the shore at Pozzuolo now alone remain to prove the position of the bridge where Caligula signalized his vanity by a ridiculous triumphal procession; of the palaces and baths of Cæsar, Nero, and Pompey, a few scattered stones, a few caverns in the rocks on the wild sea-shore, are all that remain, save a name. The Monte Nuovo, three miles in circumference, arose amidst flames and smoke, in a single night, A.D. 1538, on the shores of the Lake Averno, and remains without tree or vegetation, a mournful monument above the annihilated haunts of luxurious pleasure, that have for ever vanished from that desolated and forsaken land!

It seemed as if the word of the Lord had gone forth to avenge his insulted laws. The tyrants and their dwelling-places have perished; and though vice may still infest these blasted districts, it is the vice of the poor—of beings degraded by want, and *malaria*, and ignorance, to the very lowest state of existence.

No language can pourtray the profound mournfulness of the country we passed on our way to the Grotto of the Cumean Sybil. Its rank, rich vegetation conveyed no idea of abundance, when we, at the same time, beheld the miserable wretches who tilled the vineyards. Yet commerce had here once established one of her richest marts, and the city of Cuma extended far over the cliffs and neighbouring plains.

The roads we traversed for miles were rough with its ancient pavement, and pieces of rude stone-work were from time to time pointed out to us as the remains of a temple or a bath. The whole district is like a place of tombs; and such is the wildness of its solitude, that, after our carriage had proceeded about a quarter of a mile,

between two apparently interminable fields of thick reeds which, much higher than the vehicle, hung continually across the road and obstructed our way, some of our party began to entertain serious fears that our Neapolitan coachman had conducted us to that secluded spot with no good intent, and expected every instant to see half-a-dozen armed banditti spring from the covert beside us. But the man was honester than we expected, and without having seen a human being for several miles, we arrived in safety at a rugged gate, that opened into the wide, grassy sea-shore, overgrown with stunted myrtles, at the base of an enormous crag or mountain, which seemed to have been suddenly cast up from the level plain, by some great convulsion of nature.

A poor ragged creature was waiting there, alone in the deep solitude, for the travellers whom curiosity might bring to this otherwise unfrequented spot. He knew every turning and winding about the ancient city, or, rather, amongst the lonely rocks of the high cliff on

which most of its noble buildings are said to have been erected, and in which is still to be seen the Cavern of the Sybil. But he knew only the names of the places he pointed out; they were nothing more to him than a means of earning a scanty subsistence; and he honestly confessed his wonder as to what could bring so many rich strangers to a spot where even the soldiers of the coast-guard, in the hut under the rock, had a horror of being compelled to abide.

In spite of the mysterious stories of the Sybil, which have attached to the name of Cuma in modern ages an interest scarcely inferior to that with which her awful revelations invested it in the early times of the Romans, we could give no credence to the marvellous tales of a passage leading from her cave on the mountain to the shores of the Lake of Avernus. Yet we regretted not that we had visited this extraordinary scene. In its desolation there is a grandeur and solemnity, that impress the soul with a deep perception of the vastness of eternity, and

the relentless power of time which sweeps man and all his works to oblivion. It is a solitude not soothing, but elevating, and painful as the presence of death.

When we left this melancholy district, a short drive brought us to the open shores of the cheerful little lake of Fusaro. The king has a pretty fishing-house by the side of its transparent waters; and though the royal family now seldom come to eat the fresh oysters which are there found in perfection, the building adds to the beauty of the scene. The oyster-beds are now let, and their produce sold at a high price.

From thence we crossed the hills to Baiæ, and as we approached the sea, once more enjoyed a view of the most varied and enchanting beauty; and were this now abandoned and unhealthy country once more cultivated, and pleasant villages and neat cottages scattered over its waving hills, it would be impossible to imagine a paradise more delightful. But even now it is highly picturesque; and the broken dome of the Temple of Diana, and the Rotunda of the Temple

of Venus, which still stands almost entire near the margin of the sea, instead of producing a melancholy effect, only heighten the beauty of the scene. The old castle of Baiæ, which overhangs the waves on the rocks to the right, gives, by its architecture of the middle ages, a new character to the landscape. Its fortifications are still in tolerable preservation, and the elevation on which it stands is almost the only habitable part of that unwholesome district, which, as far as the Cape of Misene, is nearly depopulated by the malaria.

Those unaccustomed to the pestilential air of these unfortunate shores feel its ill effects by violent headache and loss of appetite. Fever quickly follows these symptoms; above all, if the stranger is so imprudent as to pass a night in the environs. A few poor peasants are the sole inhabitants; and we no sooner approached the temples, than we were surrounded by a troop of beggars of all ages.

But the most persevering and audacious of our assailants was a stout, sailor-looking fellow,

who professed to be a guide. No efforts of ours could persuade him that we had no need of his services. When we stopped at a miserable hovel amidst the vines, called an inn, to order a dinner to be ready for us on our return from the Elysian Fields, a plain so called near the Cape of Misene, he was there to offer his advice to Madonna Rosa, the black-eyed, ragged old hostess, as to the dishes we ought to have. When we arrived at a ruin known by the name of the Cento Camerelle, about two miles distant, he suddenly sprang from amongst the bushes to guide us through the labyrinths; and though his services were again rejected, we found him awaiting us near the lake called the Mare Morto. At every remarkable object on our return he sprang to the side of the carriage; he haunted us like an evil spirit at every turn, till at length, on approaching our inn, he declared his intention to open the oysters we had brought with us from Fusaro.

Here, however, there were other poor creatures who considered this task to be theirs in

right of office, and loudly protested against this arrangement. Abuse the most insulting, the most degrading, such as no Roman would have borne without seeking prompt revenge, was showered on him from all sides; but still he persisted in forcing on us his smiling services, and ran off to the sea for a bucket of water to wash the fish, delighted that he had at length found something to do for which he could demand payment. On his return, he hastened to assist those engaged in opening the shells; but no sooner had he taken one in hand, than all the inhabitants of the cottage attacked him in such violent language, that, though he turned pale with rage and drew forth his oyster knife as if with sinister intentions, he was compelled for the time to retreat. We heard afterwards, he actually had the audacity to return ere long, to demand a share of the money we paid the others, when the whole party, our coachman included, fell upon him with sticks, and fairly beat him from the court-yard.

All this passed in a place so wild, and amongst

a people so savage in appearance, that it was impossible not to feel some degree of apprehension. In fact, the inn of Madonna Rosa, though highly picturesque, being divided by a grove from the main road, and embosomed in vineyards, near the rocky and lonely sea-shore, was more like a haunt for banditti, than a place of refreshment for civilized travellers; yet there was no other in the neighbourhood. The dirt of the vast paved bed-room, where our dinner-table was spread, surpassed all description. A couple of great, savage, half-starved hounds prowled round us with hungry growls, and were with difficulty driven from the chamber, when they were speedily replaced by a ragged wretch who came to move our compassion by the display of his limbs covered with leprosy, and another with a stunted arm. Neither the old lady herself, nor her viands, were at all of a more prepossessing description. One of our party remembered her twenty years before, a gay and handsome bride, but now she was a withered crone in mourning weeds; and the white, square

linen over her head did not conceal her grey and unkempt locks. And the dinner!—but from that we escaped as quickly as possible, and returning to our carriage, departed with an escort of beggars, whose whines saluted us on every side.

Even our coachman had evident apprehensions of an attack from robbers, or our obstinate guide of the morning, when the gloom of evening overtook us whilst we were yet on the new road along the lonely sea-shore; and we all rejoiced when, after repassing Pozzuolo and the grotto of Posilipo, we found ourselves in safety in the lighted streets of Naples.

CHAPTER VII.

Railroad to Castell' a Mare—The town—Trade improvements—Coachmen—Bargain-making—Drive to Sorrento—Silk weaver—His conversation—Orange groves—Tasso's villa—Dear wine—Jesuits—Neapolitan hospitality—Young priest—Coachman's courtesy—Return.

On the eighteenth of January, the sun shone more warm and brightly in Naples than in the month of May in England. The clear blue sky was without a cloud, and the purple sea was smooth as a mirror, whilst a straight column of smoke rose from Vesuvius, about twice the height of the mountain, and then spread broad and still, like the head of a gigantic pine-tree. Under such favourable auspices we set off early

in the morning to visit Sorrento, a village situated on the shore of the bay immediately opposite Naples.

We found the station of the railroad to Castell' a Mare, which has now been open several years, near the ancient market-place, once the scene of Masaniello's insurrection. This building has none of the extravagant elegance of such erections in England, but it is clean, well built, and sufficiently commodious for all the purposes for which it is intended. The passengers by the first class were few; by the second, they amounted to about eighty, amongst whom were many priests; and in the third were as many persons as the carriage could contain. As we have before said, laziness is a universal Neapolitan characteristic, and the poorest wretch would give his last gran to escape the fatigue of walking from the city to Torre del Greco or Castell' a Mare.

The railroad has only one line of rails, and the train of carriages is obliged to wait midway, till the one coming from an opposite

direction has passed on a second branch that is constructed for this purpose at the centre. Nearly half the expense of the double line has thus been saved, whilst the accommodation is all the state of the country requires. To Castell' a Mare the distance is fourteen miles, which we performed in an hour.

The whole line of road is near the edge of the sea, and the traveller commands uninterrupted views on both sides of the most surpassing beauty as he glides along under the villages of Portici, Resina, Torre del Greco and others. Vesuvius is ever the most remarkable feature on the left, whilst the varied forms of convents, and churches, and villas, with their picturesque terraces, gardens, arcades and orange groves, form a foreground whose charms are every instant different; whilst the views over the rippling waters of the glittering Mediterranean and its rocky islands, are to be compared only to the enchanting pictures of Claude.

The old streets of Castell' a Mare, like those

of almost all small Italian towns, are narrow and dirty; but since the opening of the rail-road, new avenues and new buildings have extended on every side of the town, and there is an air of commercial activity in the whole place, which augurs well for its future advancement and wealth. The rapid communication with Naples has wonderfully increased the advantages of its situation for manufactures and trade; its little port is full of small trading craft, and a second pier is now building, which will probably render the accommodation for vessels superior to that at Naples.

At Scaffati, a village about half a league from the town, is an extensive manufactory of cotton goods, carried on for the last thirty years by a Swiss house with great success; and at the village of Angri, about the same distance in another direction, a second has been more recently established, by two of the indefatigable inhabitants of the same industrious country, who, like the Scotch, are to be found in almost every land. In addition to all this, the pro-

ductions of the country round form a rich fund for trade, and its oranges and its oil are sent even to Russia.

But the natives, from ignorance or idleness or the want of enterprise, allow even such speculations to fall into the hands of foreigners; and wherever any activity in manufactures or commerce is apparent, it is quite certain that either the English, or the Swiss, or perhaps both, are largely concerned in it. The steam carriages on the railroad come from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the machines for their steam boats are now made by an Englishman at Portici, whilst all the mills for spinning and weaving thread and cotton are in the hands of the Swiss.

A great source of gain to the inhabitants of Castell' a Mare and its neighbourhood are the numerous furnished and unfurnished villas which cover the whole of the base of the mountains to the south and east of the town, and, embosomed in orange and olive groves, are shadowed by the high lands from the burning

rays of the sun, and enjoy even in summer delicious breezes from the sea.

Here many Neapolitan and foreign families resort during the hot season. But here, as well as in the city, though apartments are extremely dear, strangers should be certain before they take possession of a lodging, that it contains everything necessary for their use. After they are once in the house, it is vain to demand any promises previously made by the landlord; they have only been uttered to beguile, without the smallest idea of their being binding.

A gentleman of our acquaintance, who took an apartment for the summer, found on his arrival, that it contained only one tea-cup for himself, his wife, and nine children; and on his complaining to the mistress of the house, received for answer, that they must pass it from one to another, and do with it as well as they could, for she had no more to give. The only resource in such an emergency is to withhold the rent, which it is the custom to pay

in advance, till the stipulated necessaries are provided.

On leaving the railroad travellers are immediately assailed by a crowd of innkeepers, porters, and beggars, all screaming at the top of their voices, and tearing and pulling at one another, as if they were mad, to get possession of the strangers or their baggage. Their yells are absolutely deafening, and no sooner is a way forced amidst this crowd, for those who wish to proceed further, than a second combat commences with the coachmen, who are always waiting in the street for fares.

If the stranger peaceably takes the first that offers, he is sure to pay more than double the just and usual price; and if, to make a better bargain, he affects indifference and proceeds towards the stand of omnibuses, he is followed up the street by four or five equipages, with one, two, or three horses each; whilst the coachmen on their boxes, and their different agents, dirty lounging fellows, who appear to have no other means of existence, all holloa and

scream their different demands in his ears as they proceed in procession, till it is impossible to understand much more than "Signor—Eccellenza—two piastres—something to drink—Signor—a piastre and a half, and leave to fill my carriage with other passengers—Eccellenza, impossible — something to drink — a bottle, Eccellenza."

After such a struggle, we succeeded in obtaining an excellent open calash, and three horses, and a decent-looking coachman at our entire disposition, to take us to Sorrento and return by four o'clock for six shillings, the coachman pronouncing a muttered hope that he might be permitted to take some other passenger on the box, as we occupied only two places in the interior. But we soon discovered the vanity of such engagements, for we had scarcely reached the outskirts of the town, when our charioteer stopped short, and proposed that a decently dressed man, who was about to set off for Sorrento by another conveyance, should be transferred to the front seat of ours.

"He is quite a gentleman," he said, "one of the first men in Sorrento;" and as we knew remonstrance would be vain, we quietly submitted, and the unknown traveller took his place opposite to us.

He was a man with very projecting black eyes, about fifty, whose blue coat and mantle were considerably the worse for wear; whose shirt had at least seen a week's service, and whose ungloved hands were of a remarkably dark hue, as much probably from want of soap and water, as from exposure to a southern sun and long acquaintance with his snuff-box.

During the first five minutes he made at least a dozen efforts to open a conversation, and no sooner was the smallest encouragement given, than he poured forth a flood of language that was perfectly overwhelming; and as by degrees he became more and more animated in his discourse, he seized the hands of his listeners with an affectionate energy beyond all expression, and screamed at the very top of his

voice till we were nearly deafened, and he grew red and breathless with the exertion.

He talked of oranges, he talked of the state of the country—the price of labour and the price of pork—of commerce—of the railroad and the delights of Italy—nothing escaped his eloquence —but, above all, he talked of himself, which was evidently his most favourite subject.

He soon gave us to understand that he was a very extraordinary man — a very superior man—and that if we wished to have a good idea of the real state of things in the kingdom, it was a most fortunate circumstance for us that we had made his acquaintance, for there was nothing escaped his knowledge or observation.

"Idleness, signor, idleness is the great evil," he said. "People are too easily contented. The ruin of this country, signor, is, that when a man gets a little capital, instead of striving to make it more, he withdraws himself from all business, and sits down quite satisfied to do nothing.

"How can there be any progress, any improvement in that way, signor? they absolutely do nothing, but eat and sleep, signor! an animal life, signor; and their wives and their daughters are quite as bad; they have no education, no activity, and think of nothing from morning till night but their priests and their lovers. Idleness, idleness is the ruin of men, women, and children. I am the sole exception; I cannot live without action. I have established a manufactory for spinning silk, and have made a very pretty thing of it — but then I am always busy, always in a bustle; I have two sons, signor—they conduct the affairs at home, whilst I go, now to Naples, now to Nocera. One day there, another day here—in fact, nobody knows where I am, so quick are my movements, and I keep matters famously in order; whilst all my neighbours, who cannot live without their siesta—a sound sleep of two or three hours after dinner—declare I am mad, simply because I delight in activity, signor; it is my pleasure. What the devil, they say, cannot an

old fellow like that be content to be quiet? They don't understand the delights of travelling, of energy, of action! But here is my house, signor; pray descend. I shall be delighted to show you over my establishment — to pay you every attention in my power," he added; when, to our amazement, the carriage stopped before an elegant, new-built palace, surrounded by colonnades and beautiful gardens, which in England would have been a suitable dwelling for a man with five thousand a year.

"Pray walk in," he continued, after he had paid the coachman about a shilling for his ride. "You won't, signor!—much distressed!—most truly afflicted!—and wish you a most delightful journey. If ever you return to Sorrento, I shall be delighted to do you any service in my power. Your most obedient, humble servant, and sincere friend!" And the carriage drove on, and we left our new acquaintance with his hands pressed upon his heart, and his head bent towards us, with an expression of the most devoted love and affection. Such is a fair specimen

of the general Neapolitan character—" all sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The road from Castell a' Mare to Sorrento has been made by the present king. Formerly there was no way of arriving at the delightful valley where it terminates, except by crossing the sea, or passing on foot, or on mules, by a small smugglers' path over the mountains—a task attended both with difficulty and danger. The way now lies along the edge of the sea, sometimes skirting ravines, covered with the orange and the olive, and enlivened by ancient convents and villages; at others passing along terraces, partly cut in the rocks and partly formed by masonry, and overhanging the sea at such a vast height above its waves, that the boats and men beneath are scarcely visible to the naked eye. Every turning discloses new views, the most picturesque and varied, of the precipitous and winding shore.

The little village of Vico, with its church, behind which rise woods which even in winter are bright and verdant, and the ancient palace,

crowning, like a fortification, a bold rock that juts out into the sea, present a landscape of most surpassing beauty. The palace has recently been purchased by a foreign merchant, who has repaired and embellished it, fitting up the upper story for his own use, and letting the remainder as an hotel. I cannot imagine a more delicious place of residence; surrounded by a country of the most luxuriant and romantic beauty, embosomed in orange groves and lovely gardens, it commands views over the whole Bay of Naples; its winter is like a bright and perpetual spring, whilst in summer the heat is ever tempered by the cool breezes from the Mediterranean.

On leaving this charming place, the road suddenly turns round a point to the mountain, and descends by a winding gallery into the valley of Sorrento, which more than half encircled by mountains, from which it slopes down towards the sea, is probably about three miles square, and at a first glance appears a forest of orange and lemon trees, whilst the dusky olive covers

all the upper part of the hills. White houses are scattered along nearly the whole of the shore, and lovely villas, and monasteries, and churches, and solitary cottages every where peep out amongst the dark-green foliage. It is probably the most abundant part of the whole kingdom of Naples; but the immense quantity of provisions daily carried thence to the capital, and the numbers of strangers who make the valley their residence during the summer, contribute to render all things dear, even for the inhabitants themselves. The ordinary wages of labour are one shilling a day to gardeners, the same to agricultural labourers and those who work on the roads; the time of labour required being, with the intermediate times of repose, sixteen hours. The spinners of silk can earn from fourpence to sixpence a day.

The Jesuits, only a few years ago, for the first time fixed themselves in this delicious valley. At the commencement they were only four or five in number, and purchased a small house overhanging the sea. Others joined them, they

required more accommodation, and they enlarged their dwelling. The further increase of their numbers obliged them to add a wing to the building, which has now become a seminary, whilst its inhabitants are every day extending their power. Yet all this for long went on quietly and silently; no one knew what was passing behind the high walls that surrounded their garden and dwelling; but their influence was daily felt more and more, though those they seek to govern are unconscious whence it proceeds. But it was exercised for no good purpose. Satisfied that the ignorance of the people is the best foundation for their authority, they make no efforts to dispel it; and the poor children of the valley are still as ignorant and neglected as before the pious fraternity became the inhabitants of their shores, or the education of the whole kingdom had been confided to their care.

The ancient palace, called the house of Tasso, though the poet only resided there for a very short period of his life, has recently been sold,

and converted into a hotel. The family by whom it had been for centuries preserved, nearly in its original state, is now almost extinct; and the last proprietor, who resides at Palermo, when he sold the house, removed thither all the remaining relics of the immortal poet. Amongst others was a small table, at which he is said to have written in a cabinet or boudoir still called the study of Tasso, the window of which opens on a stone terrace overhanging the sea-shore, but so far above it, that the murmur of the waves is scarcely audible, as they break against the rocks.

Willingly would we have lingered in this lovely retreat, hallowed by the brightest associations, and where the charms of nature acquire a new enchantment, when we remember that on the very spot where we stand in the summer twilight, when the light breeze brought entrancing odours from the orange groves, and the murmur of the distant waves alone broke the silence of nature, the young poet may first have seen those brilliant visions, which, after-

wards, embodied in melodious verse, were to contribute to the enjoyment of all future generations, and immortalize his name amongst every civilized nation of the earth. But all romantic feelings were quickly dispelled by the appearance of a red-faced waiter, to announce that dinner was on the table; and completely disenchanted, we left the room with no other feeling than that of regret, that the memory of Tasso should be here abused as a mere sentimental humbug to attract customers.

Nevertheless we must admit that this hotel deserves every praise for its cleanliness and orderly arrangements, as well as for the beauty of its apartments, which in summer must be delightful for their coolness and tranquillity; although in winter these vast chambers, without sun or fire, seem cheerless, even in Italy, to English eyes, in spite of silken hangings, marble tables, and classic busts of undoubted antiquity, which render them a residence calculated for the reception of royalty.

We paid moderately for the excellent fare of

which we partook, but we formed some idea of the landlord's method of charging more noble customers, when we saw a wine of the country set down at the head of his list, at four ducats, or thirteen shillings a bottle! When the waiter was questioned in the broad Neapolitan dialect what it meant, and saw we understood the trick, he laughed immoderately, and confessed it was only some of the best wine of his master's own growth, and that to him, as a proprietor, it could not have cost more than two-pence, or at most three-pence a bottle!

"We only charge that to foreign grandees, who have need of something dear," he added, with a cunning glance over his shoulder, as he left the room.

Such opportunities for profit or plunder, however, seldom occur, and may perhaps be excused, when we remember the immense outlay of the landlord to render his house suitable for the reception of strangers, though visitors are rare during more than half the year.

Many parts of Sorrento are said to be un-

pleasant in summer from the depth of sand on the roads and streets, and the terrible pest of sand-flies. But in the month of January we of course experienced neither of these inconveniences, and enjoyed, without drawback, the delicious softness of the air, the brilliance of the cloudless sky, and rich verdure of the orange trees, perfectly laden with their golden fruit, like Swiss orchards in the month of September, which excited all the feelings of pleasure, only awakened in other lands by the spring.

Half-ruined fortifications still surround the town, and the moss-grown bridges over the fosse, and the old gates with the rude stone statues of their patron saints upon the battlements, are highly picturesque. With infinite pleasure we wandered amongst these scenes, where Nature is rapidly regaining her supremacy over man's perishing works; but we found the church and other buildings within the town but little worthy of attention.

At the appointed hour we took our departure,

and our coachman, apparently delighted that we had permitted him to earn an additional shilling from the silk spinner, was all politeness and attention on our return. Tempted by the quantity of beautiful fruit we saw every where hanging around us, we desired him to stop at the first shop where it was possible to purchase a supply. This he accordingly did; and after we had taken what we wished, our astonishment was great beyond measure, when he assured us, with a most friendly smile, that there was nothing to pay, either for the oranges, or the glass of wine he had presented with them.

"The master of the shop was his uncle," he said, "and most happy to be of service to us;" and all the good people round the door bowed and smiled as if they had the greatest pleasure in showing such a little attention to their cousin's employers. On we went, with the happy persuasion that we had at length experienced an instance of the hospitality said to exist in those parts of the country, at a distance from the metropolis, and more than ever dis-

posed to show indulgence to our generous and attentive coachman.

Ere we had proceeded far, it was called into exercise by our permission being demanded for a handsome, stout young priest to take a place in our carriage; and as we made no objection, he quickly mounted, with many polite salutations.

His close black gown was studded with at least a hundred little silk buttons down the front, and was of the finest cloth; the small collar above it was of the most delicate lawn, and his black mantle and enormous three-cornered hat were brightly new and scrupulously clean. He spoke little; but when he left the carriage, after riding about four miles, he bowed to us, and put two-pence into the hand of the coachman. The man gave it him back again with undisguised disdain, and with some difficulty obtained four-pence instead.

"Pig!" muttered the coachman, glancing towards us as he remounted his box; and without the smallest sign of respect, he left the

priest to take his way down a broken path towards some cottages amongst the rocks beneath the road. In another half hour we arrived at Castell' a Mare.

We had scarcely descended from our carriage, when we were surrounded by the same party who had tormented us when we engaged it. One wanted a bottle of wine for the trouble he had then had; another actually snatched a piece of money from the hand of my companion as a due reward for his exertions; and though our coachman compelled him to return it, our ideas of Neapolitan hospitality were quickly put to flight, when this fellow, after receiving his stipulated payment, coolly demanded a shilling more for our oranges! the couple of oranges which, in the hearing of his relations, he had, with well-assumed generosity, insisted on our accepting gratis!

We gave him the half of his demand, and, more provoked at our own credulity than at the fellow's impudence, we left the party to divide their spoil at their pleasure, and hurried to take

our tickets to return to Naples by the railroad.

We needed not this little adventure to convince us that railroads in Italy, more than in any other part of the world, are of inestimable value to the traveller, were it only that by the fixed prices paid on these establishments he is saved from a continual combat to escape the impositions of coachmen and all their clan.

CHAPTER VIII.

Lazzaroni—Their modes of life—San Carlino—Magic lantern—Gambling—Why encouraged—The lottery—The Vicaria—A fortune-telling monk.

MANY persons who have not visited Naples, suppose that the lazzaroni are a band of idle desperadoes, who, lounging about in perpetual idleness, live totally apart from the people, and are only capable of handling a dagger, or picking a pocket.

But the reality is very different. The lazzaroni are the lowest order of people; and all those who in Naples live by daily labour, beneath the class of mechanics, are comprehended under this name.

They beset strangers to carry their baggage, they pursue them to act as guides, they defraud them as boatmen, and, ready for every service, they are sailors, fishers, porters, shoeblacks, grooms, and labourers, all in turn. In fact, it has been said of them, that they follow more callings than they have limbs to their bodies.

The small gains necessary to procure the means of existence in Naples, combined with the oppression exercised in the provinces, and the want of employment there, tend constantly to increase the numbers of these poor creatures in the city. They are calculated to amount to above forty thousand; and are certainly the most good-humoured, gay, and undebauched mob in Europe; though, on the other hand, little scrupulous as to petty thefts, somewhat proud of their skill in cheating, and setting so little value on life, that they are most of them ready at any time to remove a worthy Christian to another world in the most expeditious manner, either for the love of God, or the love of gold.

Many of the lazzaroni are even taken into service in private houses, where they are not only employed as scavengers, porters, grooms, water-carriers and hewers of wood, but, honest when confided in, are trusted with the care of plate, and the conveyance of money, without ever giving cause for suspicion or complaint. Though paid but little wages, they are ever faithful, merry, and content.

The fishermen also belong to this class, and are full of spirit and activity. Work is their delight, and they are never weary in the pursuit of their laborious calling. Every stroke of their oars is accompanied by the note of a song, or some joyous exclamation.

But there is a wide difference between such simple-hearted fellows and the audacious idlers who infest some of the streets of the city. We have seen many a fierce and threatening countenance beneath the red woollen cap of loungers on the quay, who lay in watch to chase, during the day, the passengers whom they intended to plunder, under the cover of the

night, or even to assassinate, should resistance be made to their demands.

When the lazzaroni are unemployed, they lounge about in groups on the shores of St. Lucia, in the Toledo, the Mercato, and on the Molo, laughing, singing, gambling, disputing with one another, or sleeping in the sun. When hungry, they devour a half-rotten melon, or some other offal the rich have thrown away, or they help themselves to a bunch of grapes from other people's vines, or they go and hold a horse, or open a carriage door, to obtain a gran, which suffices to purchase a melon, or a plate of maccaroni, or a slice of bacon, all of which stand prepared for them at the corner of every street.

Contented and moderate, if a poor fellow can procure such cheer, he has no further need for next day. But if by cheating, or as a reward for some slight service, he becomes master of a carline, he goes and purchases fish, and screams through the streets that he has the most wonderful animal in the world to

dispose of, till he sells it, at length, for twice the money it cost him.

His next care is how to spend this treasure to the best advantage. One portion goes for lemonade or iced water; a second for a piece of cheese or sugar-plums; and the remainder he reserves to give him admission into San Carlino, the people's theatre, where the half-naked beggar sits perfectly at his ease by the side of the wealthy proprietor, and enjoys beyond expression the representation of the tricks and drolleries of his own class, though the coarse wit on the stage is certainly not calculated to improve either his morals or his taste.

The little theatre of San Carlino was in former days frequently visited by King Ferdinand, to whom the pictures of low-life he saw there afforded a more congenial amusement than the noble representations of the Opera House of San Carlos.

A stranger who wishes to study the character of the Neapolitan people cannot do better than follow this royal example, for no where are their

humours and their modes of life so pleasantly and faithfully represented. Yet nothing can exceed the wretched poverty and rudeness of this comic theatre. The poorest strolling company in an English or French village would decorate a barn to make a better appearance. The company in the eight boxes which compose the dress circle could almost shake hands with each other over the pit; and coloured papers and painted boards are its sole ornaments. The white-washed passage, leading from the street, is so narrow, that it is impossible for two persons to walk along it abreast.

We paid two grans for our admission, and creeping in under a low door, took our place amidst an audience composed of sailors, lazzaroni, fish-women, and all the scum of Naples. There was scarcely a whole coat in the assembly; few of the men had two-pence in their pocket, and very few a home; and yet the enjoyment of all was without a cloud of care, and nothing could exceed their heartfelt, honest expressions of true delight.

The piece represented was a story of Neapolitan life, and in the people's dialect. Pantaloon and Punchinello, the white and black masks of Naples, performed the principal parts. Pantaloon in a pointed cap, and the Punchinello with the sleeves of a white shirt, hanging down nearly to his feet, played Punch's ridiculous tricks, at which the audience laughed, and shouted, and clapped, with an enthusiasm of delight which was truly infectious; for the follies of Punch are so extraordinary, and the blows he receives are so richly deserved, that even the gravest philosopher must be amused. Not less characteristic of the lazzaroni's delight in every species of amusement is the puppet-show on the Molo, where the mysteries of Holy Writ are represented by dolls, or the shadows of a magic lantern.

At the door of a dilapidated erection, resembling a robber's den more than a place of amusement, a man shouts, in a deafening voice, that for one gran everything might be seen there which had passed in the Holy Land at the death

of Jesus Christ. We paid the money, and entering, found within the most wretched magic lantern, which half-a-dozen half-naked beggars were admiring with amazement, whilst the director shouted out, "Behold, gentlemen, the wonderful birth of our Lord! Admire the beauty of the colouring, and the devil's rage, who is standing there to the right, biting his nails in a corner. Admire — observe," &c.; and so he went on, till suddenly interrupting his narrative, he cried, "You, gentlemen, can well understand that this work could not be executed for the paltry remuneration of one gran a-head. No, it was produced only for the honour of the arts and your gratification, gentlemen, who are my patrons."

Whereupon the beggars expressed their delight, by clapping, stamping, and shouting with the utmost vehemence, and then took their departure, to give place to other spectators like themselves.

And thus the lazzaroni finishes the day as he began it, without care and without money.

At other times he stands to listen to a declaimer in the street, who recounts to him the history of imaginary heroes, or of real banditti. Adventures of robber life, with its crimes and its dangers, have a peculiar charm for him; yet never, even during the times of Spanish rule, could he be taught to take pleasure in the savage enjoyment of bull fights, or the cruel spectacle of an auto da fè. But as he listens to a wild and exciting narrative, his whole soul is engrossed by the true or fictitious adventures which he implicitly believes, and his countenance and his exclamations alike express his delight.

When weary of idleness, he joins in some passing religious procession, or assists at mass, where he listens with absorbed attention to the music in the church of his patron saint, and is happy in the conviction that he thus wins in pastime a certain entrance into heaven.

Vehement, passionate, and energetic, his common manner of speaking resembles a struggle for life or death; hands, feet — nay, his

whole body, is called into requisition to express their meaning. One moment the lazzarone strikes himself, like a madman, at the back of his head, to make you understand that he has been cheated; the next, he bends down and describes a circle with his hand, which signifies "I care nothing about it." If he wishes to say, "I understand you," he presses his fore-finger against his lower eye-lid; if he means "take care," he covers the upper part of the eye; and to express "no," there are many different signs.

In short, by looks and movements, he expresses his thoughts, his feelings, and his passions, much more clearly and strongly than others do by words.

In the wildest excesses of the carnival, you seldom see the people guilty of rudeness or impropriety. They appear to possess an innate feeling of propriety and decency, in some respects; or it is perhaps a consequence of their habitual abstemiousness, that they have no taste for rude and savage sports. Music and dancing

they delight in, but gambling is their passion.

In the midst of the gayest fête, two men may often be seen in some dark corner of a street, with bent bodies and limbs, trembling with eager excitement, stretching out their fingers with shouts of "Three, four, all!" as if they were mad, or their very existence depended on the result of the game. Nothing disturbs them; they are unconscious of all that is passing near; and if Vesuvius were to burst above the town, they would still stretch out their fingers, and cry, "Five, eight, all!" till swallowed up in the burning lava, for they are playing at morra, the national game throughout the whole of Italy. This amusement consists in nothing else but guessing the number of fingers which the players suddenly stretch out. He who first guesses right five times, has won the game.

The lazzaroni are the slaves of superstition; their moral feeling is only such as Nature has implanted in their hearts; they too frequently despise honesty, and consider veracity a defect

of temperament, whilst success justifies every means; and they can find an excuse for every crime except foolish good-nature, which is easily imposed on. Their ideas of justice are as false as their ideas of religion; they pity the murderer, but not his victim, and give the criminal their admiration in proportion as he excels in cunning and audacity. There is nothing they so thoroughly despise as the laws and social order; and revenge they regard as a necessity.

Yet these are the vices of uncultured savages, and were they once liberated from the dominion of priests and tyrants, and enabled to participate in the progressing knowledge of the age, there can be little doubt that this vivacious and clever people would soon rise high in the scale of humanity. Even now, much that is poetical betrays itself in all their expressions, and a wild energy which would be capable of effecting great things, if directed aright.

In addition to the advantages which their climate bestows on these poor people, the consciousness of their political importance may also

add something to their happiness. Though they live under a despotism, they allow no alteration to be made in the government, without eagerly seizing the opportunity to make the necessity for their approbation strongly felt by all parties. Such a chance of gain is not to be lost; and to all reforms which have been brought about without disturbances and pillage, the lazzaroni have been ever decidedly opposed. They have invariably taken up a threatening position against the supreme party, until appeased by concessions, and grants, and amusements.

It was said before the last disturbances at Naples, that the lazzaroni were out of humour, and difficult to please. The preceding revolution had taken place, in a great measure, without their participation; and with the best will in the world, they had found no opportunity to plunder.

It is no doubt the interest of a despotism to pander to the pleasures and vices of such a mob, and to govern them by the means of their ignorance, their vices, and their superstition, so that

the brute force of a licentious and unprincipled multitude, directed by the hirelings of the government, may enslave the middle classes, and arrest the progress of knowledge and of industry, which priests and tyrants think equally inimical to their authority.

But even in the present condition of the lazzaroni, who thus enjoys one pleasure after another, without labour or thought, there is much which might be envied by richer men. It may well be asked, if this beggar, scantily clad in shirt and linen pantaloons, is not a happier being than the workmen of northern regions, many of whom rarely see the rays of the sun, and who pass their days in ceaseless toil to procure scanty food for themselves and their families. Their dreary and troubled existence is never broken by a moment of pleasure; they are never elevated nor animated by beholding the beauties of nature in all its glory, and, finding their only amusement in a beer-house, they are ignorant of the careless joy and boundless delight which are the lot of the poorest Neapolitan.

He, on the contrary, has neither care for his house, for his shop, nor his garden. No threatening future, no anxious anticipations, no pressing tax-gatherers, and no sense of oppression trouble his existence, if he can procure his scanty fare. Without a roof or clothes to cover him, which the mildness of the climate make almost unnecessary during the greatest part of the year, and without a family which he does not desire, he is happier than even the wealthy amongst us, and to the poor of many lands he might be an object of envy.

That even the pleasures of the Neapolitans are used by their government as a means of plundering them, must be admitted by all, who are aware of the profits it derives from the Lotto, a kind of lottery, sanctioned by church and state. Thus encouraged, it engrosses, in a most extraordinary manner, the thoughts, time, and money of the lower and middle classes, both in town and country. Tickets are sold in all parts of Naples, and throughout the kingdom of the two Sicilies, in shops, where the sellers are ac-

credited agents of the government. To entice adventurers to purchase, the last lucky number may be seen stuck up in front of these legal gambling-houses, ornamented with huge bows of coloured paper, whilst others for the next lottery are exposed in tempting order for sale.

As we proceeded to the Vicaria, to be present at the drawing the lottery, there was yet a quarter of an hour before the fate of these unsold tickets would be decided, and we saw several half-famished-looking creatures standing counting the last grans they possessed, before these dens of destruction, and others hurrying in, with an expression bordering on insanity in their eager faces, as, persuaded like all gamblers, of ultimate success, they gave the price of their last piece of furniture, in the vain hope of recovering the fortune they had gambled away.

The drawings take place every Saturday, in the huge old hall of the tribunals, in the ancient palace of the early Neapolitan kings, called the Vicaria, in the neighbourhood of the Gate of Capua. This gloomy and enormous building

is surrounded by a massive wall, and situated in the most ancient part of the city, amidst narrow streets, from whence the lofty houses for ever exclude the light of the sun. In some of these dismal avenues, or *vicolos*, as they are called, it is really frightful to glance into the ruinous and desolate courts of the heavy stone buildings, or into the shops which, like black, dark, and filthy dens, yawn on either side. Without windows, their huge, ancient, wooden doors stand perpetually open to admit as much of light and air; as can find their way into such places. But what an air! laden with impurities, it seems rife with fever and pestilence; and when amidst these sinks of vice, and dirt, and misery, it is almost impossible to believe; that a few paces beyond such dark and loathsome avenues, Nature extends her treasures in every variety of beauty to the sun.

On the first floor of the Vicaria is the prison of poor culprits and debtors; and many a young and savage-looking face may be seen gazing, with envious eyes, upon the busy throngs that

are continually crossing the open place beneath. Political offenders crowd the dungeons under ground.

In honour of the ceremonies of the day, the heavy, arched gateway, by which we entered the inner court of the building, was surrounded by a trumpery drapery of white and red calico, bespangled with bits of gold paper, above which were placed two miserable plaster busts of the king and queen, with half-a-dozen paltry lamps burning before them. Such a decoration attached to those ancient, stern, grey walls, was not only trumpery but ridiculous, and was more suited for the entrance to a puppet-show than to the seat of Justice, and one of the most ancient strongholds of the monarchy.

In the court-yard were several carriages in waiting; and as we mounted a great stone staircase leading to the upper stories of the building, crowds of lazzaroni, and men and women of the middle and lower classes, pushed past us, all hurrying in the same direction. There, where kings had trodden in all their

feudal pomp, the ragged and half-famished populace were scrambling without order or respect, in search of a paltry gain.

On entering the great, gloomy old Hall, we saw a raised platform at the further end, on which sat four judges and two priests, in the full costumes of their different professions, to give solemnity to the scene, and an assurance that all is carried on with the utmost impartiality; whilst the minister of the police, in a black silk gown, elevated in a kind of pulpit, attached to the centre of the wall on one side, presided over the proceedings of the assembly. A guard of soldiers stood at the foot of the gallery, and the remainder of the hall was crowded to excess. There could not be less than two thousand persons present. Lazzaroni with their ragged, scanty covering; wretched women with infants in swaddling-clothes, or rolled in dirty shawls, in their arms; soldiers, workmen, and miserable, haggard, hollow-eyed-looking wretches, fallen from a better class; a few decently-dressed persons, and even priests and monks, were all

crushed together into a dense mass. Except the members of the church, they were evidently all people who had to earn their livelihood; and yet there, for several hours once a week, they may be seen, not only risking a portion of their hard-earned gains, but wasting their time in idleness and the vicious excitement of gambling.

Almost immediately after our entrance, a young man advanced to the front of the platform, and having shaken a kind of box containing the numbers of the lottery, five were successively drawn by a child of the Orphan Asylum. As each was brought forth, before it was seen by the people, it was given to one of the judges, and from him passed through the hands of all the officiating personages, except those of the Minister of Police, whose seat is at a considerable distance. They were then registered, and finally a man proclaimed them, in a loud voice, to the anxious assembly.

The effect was electric on the eager throng. It seemed as if their lives, or the lives of all

dear to them, depended on this announcement, such was the clamour with which each successive number was received. Yet even amidst this confusion could be heard the cries of disappointment and despair from the ruined, undone, and famished wretches, who are well known, in many instances, to sell the bed and clothes of their wives or children to purchase a ticket, and make a last effort to recover their innumerable losses.

On our return home, we witnessed with pain the frightful agitation of the lower orders, as he news was rapidly spread through the streets. The different lottery offices we passed were surrounded by crowds of the poorest of the poor; and many miserable wretches, stunned by disappointment, stood gazing on a list of the fortunate numbers, as if utterly unable to comprehend that their hopes of the past week were destroyed.

Others were eagerly handing them from one to another, and if we had been ignorant of what had taken place, we might have imagined that

some great and dreadful public calamity had occurred, on which the future welfare of the city and its inhabitants depended. Nor is the agitation and the ruin limited to Naples alone. Throughout the whole kingdom of the two Sicilies there are government offices for the sale of tickets, and the numbers drawn at the Vicaria are announced by couriers or telegraphic dispatches to the furthest corner of the country, within an hour after they are known.

The degrading influence of this horrible gambling extends its effects over every class, and is in truth more dreadful than a plague or an earthquake, as it is ever recurring, and never ending. The players may risk from two or three halfpence to any amount they please, and the winnings, when several numbers are taken, may, by some extraordinary combination, be immense ; but although, as in all games of hazard, this rarely if ever occurs ; whilst the losses are great and almost certain, the possibility of gain leads on the desperate blindly to destruction.

This is in truth one of the most virulent of the diseases which eat into the very existence of the people of Naples; and such is their attachment to this frightful, this incessant gambling, that it is believed that no grievance could so readily provoke a rebellion, as an abolition of the lotto.

Their daily misery is rendered supportable by the hope that at the end of the week their fortune may be established for ever by some extraordinary prize. Industry becomes paralised by a perpetual dependence on hazard, and their small gains, instead of contributing to the comfort of their families, are again and again wasted in this fatal, this withering pursuit.

In fact, it has become a complete madness with the lower orders of the people. There is a printed book in circulation, interpreting all dreams with regard to the numbers of the lotto; and any old woman who has been blest by a nocturnal vision of a lucky number, would not fail for the world to purchase it, fondly believing that heaven has deigned to make her such a

revelation to assure her future prosperity in life.

Every accident has an explication of a similar description attached to it; and to such an extent is this carried, that we were one day witnesses to an extraordinary scene thus occasioned.

A baker in the common linen costume of his trade, as he approached us in one of the narrow streets of the city, either engrossed by watching us, or a pretty modiste that was tripping along before us in holiday garments, suddenly stumbled, and came with a huge tray of bread he carried on his head flat to the ground. In a moment a crowd was around him, and a ragged fellow, near whom he fell, hastily cried out, "A lucky omen for the lotto! Tray, number five, man with a white night cap, number twelve," and so on, in accordance with the interpretations given by those skilled in such circumstances. Those around seemed to listen to his words as to an oracle, and hastily writing down the lucky numbers, hurried away to secure them as quickly as possible.

Nor are such rencontres always accidental; it is even known that paid agents of the different offices play such scenes to excite the people to become purchasers.

A great aggravation of the evil is, that the vendors of the tickets give credit, and if a poor wretch can pay a penny or two-pence down for the numbers he desires, his name is immediately inscribed; but before the Saturday drawing arrives, he must pay the full amount, and the most desperate means are resorted, to to obtain the money. Here is a new source of demoralization. All the petty pilferings of servants in household affairs, which they consider rather a proof of talent than dishonesty, are thus appropriated; a poor man, who only gains eight-pence or ten-pence a day, frequently plays regularly two or three shillings a week, and instances have come to my knowledge, of respectably dressed persons begging in the street for the means to procure a ticket, on which they felt convinced their future prosperity depended.

It is truly frightful to think of the enormous sums which are thus wrung even from the most miserable of the people, to enrich an avaricious government, at the expense of the morals and the happiness of its subjects; nay, even of their daily bread. It is a detestable and shameful tax, even if all the circumstances of its collection are conducted with the strictest honesty; but we must confess, that notwithstanding the presence of priests, and judges, and ministers of police, the drawing of the tickets, as we witnessed it, appears to afford an easy and ready means for deception and cheating.

There is a story current amongst the people, that a few years ago, a monk belonging to one of the monasteries of the city, gave a poor man of his acquaintance a list of five numbers of the lottery, assuring him, that they would infallibly win a quinterno, which is the greatest possible prize in the complicated game; he desired him to go instantly and purchase the tickets; the only reward for which he stipulated, was a

quarter of the enormous gain that would arise from their possession.

The poor man, who well knew that the predictions of the monk had on several similar occasions been crowned with success, though to a smaller amount, hurried off to obey his injunctions.

His endeavours to obtain the lucky numbers, and his loudly-expressed confidence in their success, attracted attention. Inquiries were instituted; the instigator of his purchase was discovered, and the monk was, on the following day, banished for ever from the city.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that none of the numbers he had named were amongst those drawn from the box in the hall of the Vicaria; though, whether the priest betrayed a secret arrangement for the deception of the public, in which he was an actor, or his prediction was the mere dictate of a superstitious confidence in his own powers of divination, is, and must remain, for ever a mystery.

CHAPTER IX.

Clergy—Their numbers—Education in their hands—Ignorance and superstition of the peasants.

We have never been able to obtain any exact account of the number of secular and monastic clergy in the kingdom of Naples, but there can be no doubt that the members of this body constitute a very large and ever-increasing part of the population. Several well-informed persons have assured me that it amounts at least to one-tenth.

The city of Naples is said to contain 450,000 inhabitants, and of these it was said, twenty years ago, that fifteen thousand were clergy.

When we remember that the means of existence are drawn, in one form or other, by this enormous and idle portion of the community, from the labouring classes, already burthened with taxes to the amount of sixty per cent., we can no longer wonder at the misery we have witnessed, since our entrance into this oppressed kingdom.

The power of the Jesuits is now supreme in Naples; and it is a remarkale fact, that wherever this order holds dominion, they are regarded with jealousy and dislike by many of the secular clergy, and most of the monkish orders, with which they are not associated.

This may, perhaps, account for the liberal spirit recently manifested by many priests of the kingdom of Naples. The Dominicans are all on the popular side, and nearly all the secular clergy, except the bishops. I have recently learnt from undoubted authority, that of the thousands now confined by the arbitrary will of the king, the one half are priests and common

people. In a recent trial for high treason, three of the five defendants were priests.

Though several orders of monks live entirely by begging, the property of the ecclesiastical body is immense. Since the Jesuits have recovered an establishment in the kingdom, they have gradually risen in favour with the king, till they are now omnipotent. They lose no opportunity of adding to their wealth, and rich legacies from noble devotees are daily falling into their hands, frequently to the utter ruin of the families of the deceased.

It need scarcely be said that nearly all the talent and learning of the clergy is to be found in this order, and as education is now once more entirely under their care, no rising genius escapes their attention, and every youth who, by his abilities, might subsequently prove a dangerous enemy to the principles of their society, or a useful benefactor to his country, is immediately enlisted in their ranks, nor do they allow any one to escape with impunity from their dominion.

A Neapolitan lady, desirous that her son should receive a more liberal education than that afforded by the schools of the Jesuits, recently sent the youth to be instructed in the kingdom of Sardinia. This was no sooner known to the Society of Jesus, than she was commanded to recal him.

On her refusing to do so, she was immediately banished from her country.

A short time afterwards, the dangerous illness of her mother, made her anxious to return to Naples; but permission for her to do so was refused, unless she brought back her son with her and placed him under the tuition of the Jesuits in Naples. Conquered by the means of her best affections, she finally submitted to this religious tyranny.

The monks of the other different orders, and the secular clergy of the whole kingdom, are generally taken from so low a class, and their education is such, as scarcely to raise them a step above the half-savage populace it is the duty of their profession to instruct and guide.

It is said that recently a discipline more severe than formerly has been introduced into the church; the young clergy have been subjected to more strict examinations on taking orders, and the tone of capacity and instruction has slightly risen amongst them, during the last twenty years; but still this vast body of unmarried men, taken from a corrupt and passionate population, necessarily retains many of the vices and characteristics of the mass to which it originally belonged. The priest is one of the people, he participates in their feelings, their superstitions, and too often in their crimes; but should, in some rare instance, his knowledge and his talent rise superior to the ordinary level of his class, should he seek to disabuse his flock of their favourite errors, their suspicions of heresy are immediately awakened, and whispers are rapidly circulated that he is a bad priest, that he believes nothing, that he has dealings with the enemy of mankind, and seeks to drag others along with him, into the abyss of destruction. In fact, the utmost caution is ne-

cessary in all dealings with a people so utterly benighted in the gloom of ignorance, as the peasantry of the interior of the kingdom of Naples.

Some idea of their abject state of superstition may be formed from the following facts, which we give under the conviction that one true picture conveys more information to the mind, than pages of general observation. The circumstances occurred last year to an Italian friend of ours, who himself recounted them to us.

On the arrival of this gentleman with a friend, on a sketching tour at the small village of Cerento, amidst the mountains behind Capua, he engaged two little boys to carry his portfolio and drawing materials, and at once set off, thus accompanied, in search of a subject for the exercise of his pencil. Some time elapsed before he decided on a point of view, and in order to do so, he made several circuits amongst the hills, which apparently excited suspicions to his disadvantage. Some hours passed away,

and the mother of the boys, who was ignorant that they had left home with a stranger, began to be anxious at their unusually long absence, and ran about the village demanding news of her children from her different neighbours.

At that moment a man arrived from the hills, who had been a witness of the artist's proceedings, and in answer to her inquiries, he blandly told her, that she might cease her clamour, for her children were irretrievably lost. "No efforts of hers could save them," he added, "for they were in the power of a sorcerer, who had carried them off to murder them for the purposes of his incantations. He had seen him with the boys, forming his mysterious circles, and by this time, no doubt, it was all over with them."

The horror of the woman at this information, the truth of which she never doubted for an instant, surpassed all words. She called on her neighbours to revenge the death of her innocent babes—she ran from house to house, summoning the peasantry to join her in extir-

pating the monster from the land; and the clamour for revenge spreading from cottage to cottage, like the extending circles around a stone cast into deep water, the whole population of the district was ere long in a state of insurrection.

The gentleman meanwhile, unconscious of the tumult his movements had excited, was quietly making a drawing upon the mountain above the village. But however deeply engaged by his occupation, he could not fail at length to remark the increasing agitation in the country beneath. He saw the peasantry rushing from their dwellings, and forming together in bands; a murmur, as of an enraged multitude, ascended even to the high point of rock on which he sat, and he could, from time to time, distinguish that those who were assembling, carried arms.

Vainly he inquired of the children what was the meaning of this extraordinary commotion; nor was it till he saw the multitude closing around him on every side, and mounting the

hills towards the spot where he was drawing, that a suspicion flashed on his mind that he was the object of the people's rage.

Fortunately, understanding their dialect, he was warned of his danger by distinguishing the word sorcerer, frequently repeated, united with threats of violence, as the crowd approached. He looked round for the children, considering that their safety would prove the best evidence of the innocence of his intentions, but they had already disappeared; and as huge stones, cast by those who had clambered to the rocks above, began to fall around him, and a countless throng of male and female peasants, in every variety of wild and ragged attire, drew nearer and nearer, some armed with guns, some with sticks and stones and implements of husbandry, and all uttering the most hideous yells and threats of vengeance, he, and the young friend who was his companion, thought that there was no disgrace in at once taking to flight.

Deserting portfolios, sketching books, and stools, they therefore ran off with the utmost

rapidity. Most fortunately they took the road towards the village, for the people, believing they would endeavour to escape in an opposite direction, to gain the interior of the country, had disposed themselves on the farther side of the hill, in an ambush, into which had our friends fallen, they would probably never have escaped alive.

They had not fled far, before they met the magistrate of the village, with a party of *gens-d'armes*, proceeding to investigate the cause of the disturbance, and put it down by force, if necessary. They lost not a moment in claiming his protection against an attack, of the cause of which they had only a vague suspicion. This was immediately and courteously granted, and the magistrate proceeded without delay to inquire the crime with which the stranger was charged. It was, however, in vain that he sought to convince the people of their error, even after the return of the children; they obstinately persisted in their belief of the gentleman's bad intentions, and one old woman,

who had armed herself with a rusty fowling-piece, was with difficulty prevented firing on them.

Though the tumult was allayed by the strong arm of authority, it may readily be supposed that our friend made no more sketches in that neighbourhood, and lost no time in returning to a more civilized district, where, even if the belief in incantations be still retained, it has not sufficient influence to excite the populace to insurrection and murder.

In all his excursions since this adventure, he has lodged, when possible, in a monastery, and for one or two days before he commences sketching, has taken care to show himself in company with some of the holy fraternity, to put at rest all doubts as to his sanctity. He has likewise procured a letter from the police in Naples, in virtue of which he can obtain an escort in all dangerous cases.

It is well that strangers should be made aware of such a state of things, for this is not a solitary instance of outrageous superstition amongst the peasantry.

A very short time has elapsed since an Englishman was attacked in a similar manner, whilst sketching between Salerno and Pæstum. He had enticed no children from their home; no meditated murder could be brought to his charge; and yet the people were as firmly convinced that he was a sorcerer, as if he had called the whole mysterious science of necromancy into action. Unfortunately, whilst he was engaged in sketching, it began to rain in torrents, and the ignorant people at once accused him of being the cause of the change of weather. The next day, at the same hour, the same thing occurred, and their murmurs were redoubled; but when, on the third day, the stranger was compelled to pack up his drawing materials by the fury of the storm, he found himself surrounded by an armed populace, who threatened him with immediate destruction. Ignorant of their language, he understood not the cause of their clamour.

For a while the people stood aloof, for they believed he bore a charmed life; till at length

a woman, more furious than the rest of her companions, flung a kind of axe at him, which wounded him severely above the hip. The mob no sooner saw that he was vulnerable, than the attack became general. Sticks, stones, and hatchets flew on every side, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he succeeded in flying a short distance before his infuriated pursuers. Finding the door of a house open, he rushed in for protection, and most fortunately it was the residence of the principal magistrate of the place. This person, being sufficiently well-informed to be aware of the injury done to the neighbourhood by such events, anxiously sought to repair the evil.

Above a dozen of the mob were immediately arrested and brought into the presence of the wounded man, and when questioned as to what had provoked their outrage, they all clamorously repeated the accusation of sorcery.

They had seen this man, they said, three days following, calling down the tempest on their fields, and in obedience to his commands,

it had ever, at the same hour, burst forth to destroy the fruits of their labours. They had seen him bowing his head up and down, as he lifted his evil eyes to the clouds, and then bent them on his magic papers, whilst he drew the lines of enchantment.

The stranger, astonished at the extent of the ignorance and superstition these declarations betrayed, begged that the poor deluded creatures might be at once released. He only demanded the punishment of the woman, who had been the first to throw her hatchet, and who, apparently not contented with the vengeance she had taken, stood muttering maledictions in the background.

For two months, as we were informed, the Englishman remained a prisoner with his wounds; and it is probable they may remind him for life of his three days' sketching at Cerento.

When the dark and universal ignorance of the peasantry is considered, who in remote districts scarcely ever see a stranger, or even any one differing from themselves except their priests,

when we couple the strong undisciplined passions and vivid imagination of a southern people, with a half savage mode of life unchanged for centuries together, with abject misery, dirt, poverty, and want even of the common decencies of life, some idea may be formed of the state of the lower orders of the kingdom of Naples. The cows, the horses, the swine of other countries, are better lodged and fed than the peasant inhabitants of many of its provinces. They are the children of impulse, born in destitution, and bred in superstition, who, cheerful and kind by nature, are yet prone to commit the most fearful crimes, and, under the delusion of passion and the utter want of moral knowledge, to consider them virtues.

Cuoco, the historian, mentions, as one of the long-existing misfortunes of the country, that the government has ever occupied itself more with the capital than the provinces. At one time, to pay a newly-imposed tax of a tenth, they were despoiled of horses, mules, and oxen, which either died for want of food, or were sold

for the benefit of the tax-gatherers; at another, when an impost of three hundred thousand ducats per annum was imposed for the construction of roads, by the Marquis della Sambucca, it was speedily diverted to other uses; and when whole provinces demanded permission to carry these projected works into execution at their own expense, and at the same time promised to pay, for ever, the provisional tax, the proposition was refused. The progress of agriculture, commerce and knowledge, is, in fact, every where rather repressed than encouraged.

CHAPTER X.

Consumptive patients—Discomforts—Protestant Cemetery — Cheapness of Provisions — Men cooks — A female beggar—Female apparel—Art and artists—Coral and cameos—Friendship.

It has been the fashion for many years, to send consumptive patients from England, in the hope of prolonging life, if not to recover health, to Naples. But from our own experience, and the sad examples we saw during a protracted residence there, we do not hesitate to pronounce that for those who suffer from a disease of the lungs, neither temporary relief nor permanent cure is to be found in that city or neighbourhood. Sick, sad, and solitary, our fellow-coun-

trymen frequently wear out existence there, without sympathy or friendly consolation, in the greatest discomfort, while they derive not the slightest benefit from the climate, which to many persons is injuriously exciting. Incessant rains are of regular occurrence towards the close of autumn, and these are frequently followed by some weeks of severe frost. We have seen Vesuvius half covered with snow, and long icicles hanging from all the fountains in Naples. At such a time, the invalid is especially made sensible of the utter want of all the comforts which sickness makes peculiarly desirable.

His bed-room is probably paved with bricks, and if with a flat roof, as damp and chill as the external atmosphere. If a wood fire be lighted in the wide chimney, it throws out little heat, whilst the smoke and the frosty air rush down in torrents. The windows and doors are rather made for the admission of currents than the exclusion of cold, and the only consolation for the sick man is when a gleam of sunshine enlivens his dreary chamber, or he is able to crawl

out to enjoy its pleasant warmth under the protecting walls of the houses in the Chiaja. All this was forcibly impressed upon our mind, with a feeling almost amounting to horror, when we one day suddenly discovered that we were by accident in a chamber where one of our dearest friends had died only a short time before. It was in what is there considered an excellent situation, but words can convey only a faint idea of its desolation.

To die in the worst inn's worst room could scarcely have been more sad to an English gentleman, than to draw his last breath in this dreary, foreign dwelling. The high, naked walls, hung with cobwebs and stained by time, the faded, scanty curtains of the meagre bed, the enormous unveiled windows admitting every air of heaven, the stained washing-stand, the two straw-bottomed chairs, the broken-legged table, the short strip of old, narrow stair-carpet, only covering the dirty bricks at the bed-side, and the universal dirt, made us shudder when we remembered that here, banished, friendless,

and alone, a refined man about town, fastidious and sensitive to a degree that amounted almost to a disease, had been condemned to breathe his last by the fiat of English physicians, who knew when they sent him from his loving friends and the comforts of his home, that they sent him away to die.

But though they must have been aware that no change of climate could restore him to health, we believe that medical men in London are ignorant of the deprivations to which a solitary invalid must be exposed in Naples, and we think it therefore our duty to give a full account of them for the benefit of future sufferers.

From this sad place we went to visit the grave of our friend in the cemetery which has been granted for the interment of Protestants; a lovely, quiet spot, where the vegetation springs up rapidly again to cover the earth which has been disturbed to make room for the dead. The number of English who repose there, and the short span of life commonly recorded on their monuments, afford sufficient evidence of

the truth of our assertion, when we repeat, that no health is to be found for consumptive patients in Naples.

But before the present political agitations, it was, no doubt, a charming residence for foreigners to whom expense was of no consideration, or for those who could speak the lazzaroni dialect, and who, well acquainted with the habits and manners of the people, were able to cope with their deceptions. To ordinary travellers, however, a brief sojourn in Naples is far from being economical. Though the meat, bread and fish are to be purchased by the natives for about one-half the price an Englishman would pay for similar articles in his own country, and wine, fruit and vegetables are ridiculously cheap, the passing foreigner is allowed to profit little by such advantages.

Though house rents are in general very low, the payment demanded for furnished apartments is exorbitant, when they are fitted up with carpets and other comforts, to suit the wants of strangers; for the Neapolitans, even of high

rank, make a trade of letting lodgings, and expect a high interest on the capital they have expended, for the purchase of luxuries, of which they have themselves no need. In fact, numbers of persons of all classes derive their means of existence in this and many other ways from the visitors from every nation, who throng Naples during the winter; nor, according to their general character, are they particularly scrupulous as to the means of doing so.

During favourable seasons, the strangers in the city are believed to amount to above thirty thousand, during whose brief sojourn, it is the principle of all the persons with whom they come in contact, that the largest possible profit must be made of them; at the most moderate calculation, it may be asserted that they pay one-third more than the value of every article they consume or purchase. The servants by whom they are habitually served, and the landlords who receive them into their houses, are prepared to take advantage of them in every possible way. If they cook at home, they pay

double for their provisions; if they are supplied daily with their dinners from a *traiteur*, which is the best and most convenient manner of living for foreigners, the cooks make a large profit. But they perform their duty well, and with great cleanliness.

We have seldom eaten better dinners than those which were brought into our dining-room in the street of Santa Theresa, by a boy all dressed in white, with a white nightcap, who carried a huge tin box upon his head, containing a brazier of charcoal, half-a-dozen well-cooked dishes, and the articles necessary for serving a neatly-appointed meal. All this is prepared by men-cooks, and every man-servant in a private family is an accomplished cook, from whom M. Soyer might take valuable hints, to rival his Turkish bill of fare.

An old fellow who acted as our butler and footman, and who performed the part of spy upon us at the same time, under the direction of his master, who was our landlord and an agent of the police, had in early life been a

trumpeter in the army of Napoleon during his unfortunate Russian campaign. He was adroit, obliging, and servile, giving us hints from time to time to be on our guard against thieves, and to keep our trunks carefully locked, whilst five minutes afterwards he repeated to his master every word he had heard us utter.

But we soon discovered, that, however clever he might be in other ways, his particular talent lay in the preparation of a dish of macaroni *à la tomate*, which is peculiar to Naples; and his skill in cookery had secured him better fare during his northern march than fell to the lot of the English soldiers, when recently attacking Russia in another quarter.

An Englishman can work hard and fight hard, no doubt, but Frenchmen and Italians possess an immense advantage over them in the vicissitudes of life, by being able to do anything well which necessity requires, and above all, to prepare, with very inadequate means, a comfortable "mess of porridge."

We have heard of an Italian man-servant,

who acted, not only the part of cook, housemaid, and butler in the service of an old princess, but who daily assisted at her toilet, and performed all the duties of an abigail, without any scruples of delicacy being experienced either by the lady or himself. The greatest familiarity subsisted between them, though the domestic never lost sight of the respect due to his mistress's rank, and with anxious fidelity used his utmost endeavours to impress others with a proper sense of it. Yet it was somewhat difficult to repress a smile, when we saw him figuring behind a crazy old carriage, in a huge cocked hat and feather, when we knew that he had that morning laced the stays of the ancient piece of nobility which sat within it, and was then going home to prepare the macaroni for her dinner.

It is thus that Italians contrive to live, with some appearance of state, on incomes with which an Englishman would starve. They keep few servants, they live on simple fare—they want little firing, they never repair nor

embellish their houses, which require little paint in that pure climate; they have few tastes, except the passion for gambling, to gratify, and they have never heard of hundreds of things which are thought by wealthy Englishmen indispensable to happiness.

But a few who have travelled are more enlightened, and when they have a knowledge of English tastes and habits of luxury, they seldom fail to derive a large profit from it.

We knew a Neapolitan, who after having travelled with an English duke, returned to let lodgings, whilst he still pursued his own profession as an artist. His apartments were elegantly arranged, and fitted up with great taste, so as to be fit for the reception of the fastidious and the wealthy.

The rooms were filled with pictures exceedingly well framed and cleverly made up, old laces, old damasks, mediæval furniture and ornaments, and veritable antiques from the modern Neapolitan manufactory, all of which were for sale, and were only placed there to be sold

for ten times their value, to the tenant, or any of his friends who might chance to take a fancy to them; so that, besides the enormous rent to be paid for so elegant an apartment, a large profit is frequently made by the sale of its contents.

Every one, in fact, with whom the traveller ordinarily comes in contact, expects to get money out of him, in some indirect as well as direct manner; and when there is no other way left, they resort to begging with the most unblushing assurance.

An old washerwoman, who was recommended to us by a friend long resident in Naples, came usually without any ceremony, into our sitting room, and invented every possible excuse for prolonging her stay.

One day, when she made her weekly visit, the weather was exceedingly cold, and seeing a bright wood fire burning on the hearth, she came without invitation or permission, in her old ragged costume, and seated herself in an arm chair upon the rug opposite to me. She

seemed to feel herself perfectly at home, and entered without restraint into conversation with me, about the unusual severity of the weather, the wants of the poor, and similar topics. I treated her with civility, for I knew that if I had ordered her away, it would have been considered a mortal affront, which she, and all belonging to her, would never have pardoned or forgotten.

Encouraged, probably, by my forbearance, she next proceeded to enquire, if I had nothing to give her to eat and drink? When this was denied, she intimated that she very much wanted a new neck-handkerchief; and showing one of the three she wore, she said she wished us to give her another exactly like it.

It was only when unwillingly convinced that there was nothing to be got from us except a trifle over the amount of her bill, that our unbidden guest took up her basket and went away grumbling, in exceedingly bad humour.

It was not long till we discovered that beg-

ging was not practised only by persons of the washerwoman's station in life.

After the lapse of a few days, an Italian lady, with whose family we had had some previous intimacy, gave us delicately to understand that she was unable to purchase the wine which her physician had prescribed for her, and that it would be a very acceptable present. The following day, as in duty bound, we sent her what she desired. The wine was received with many expressions of gratitude, and the lady afterwards called to thank us for it. We certainly were surprised, when, after all the compliments had been exchanged which are usual on such occasions, she finished by asking us for the loan of two francs, in order to make a present to our servant who had carried her the wine!

She had a precarious income and a large family, and it was probable that she was literally without afar thing; for the idle, slatternly habits of herself and her daughters, who could scarcely read, write, or mend their own clothes,

increased their necessities, and made their house both disorderly and wretched.

But female attire, except in public places, is much neglected in Naples. All articles of dress are exorbitantly dear, except the cotton handkerchiefs, which in the middle classes supply the place of caps and collars. Few of the stuffs necessary for the dress of ladies are manufactured in the country; and though they are brought from France, and even from England, the custom-house duties on such luxuries are enormous.

If an Englishwoman wishes to embroider a cushion or to make a silk purse, she will soon find, to her consternation, that such simple articles will cost her a little fortune, for wools, and beads, and snaps and silk, which she has been accustomed to purchase for a mere trifle at home. But if she finds it necessary to resort to a milliner's, to procure a head-dress, her case is desperate indeed!

Simplicity is not the taste of the Neapolitans, and she may go into all the shops in the Toledo

before she finds a thing in the shape of cap or turban which she could wear upon her head, whilst entering a drawing-room, without feeling ashamed of herself!

Having accompanied an English female friend in search of the picturesque and the becoming, through the milliners' shops of Naples, we were shown such extravagant combinations of flowers, and feathers, ribands, lace, gold, silver and beads, as perfectly astonished us. They were, probably, the refuse of the Palais Royal, imported at an enormous duty, for their price was double that of the most elegant articles of a similar description in Paris, though they seemed better calculated for Jewesses and rope-dancers, than to encumber the heads of the fair Neapolitans.

A great number of the best shops are kept by foreigners, and the Swiss are very numerous and successful, in every department of trade.

They have both cotton and silk manufactories, and even the soldiers' caps were recently made by a Swiss, who amassed a large fortune by his monopoly. Hot buns may be purchased of an

Englishman in the Toledo, with cherry brandy, and Harvey's fish sauce. His Neapolitan Majesty's coals, for gas and railways, are regularly supplied by one of our countrymen, who profits largely by the favour of the sovereign. The best confectionery is only to be procured from a native of the Engadeen; Swiss are employed to make the butter on the royal domains, which is regularly sold for the advantage of the English, who can find it no where else so good as in the royal shop in the Toledo.

Gloves are a native manufactory, and are as cheap, as all foreign articles are dear. Beautiful gloves may be bought, even by foreigners, for eight pence a pair.

As goats exist in great numbers in Calabria, Sicily, and all the hilly parts of the kingdom of Naples, there is no dearth of skins, and being exceedingly well dressed, gloves are produced very little inferior to those of France in beauty, and superior to them in strength and durability.

The best gloves are cut from the centre of

a skin, and those made from the less perfect parts bear a much inferior price.

Artificial flowers have also recently been made here in great beauty, but the cutting and polishing of coral, and the carving of cameos, on the onyx-like shells of the Mediterranean, are the arts in which the Neapolitans the most excel, and which have probably been handed down to them from antiquity.

Original portraits are beautifully cut in the cameos, and the shops of the coral carvers display an endless variety of exquisite articles for female ornament, from the little coral hand with pointed fingers, and a dozen little charms appended to it, to avert the influence of an evil eye, to bracelets and necklaces of the most elaborate workmanship. Cameos are wrought in this hard material with a taste and delicacy, which rival the productions of the ancients; and wreaths are formed for the hair, of the slender branches of the coral, finely polished, yet retaining the original form in which it is found beneath the ocean.

This manufacture of articles of luxury, which are carried to every quarter of the globe, gives much employment to a certain class of the people; and the task of polishing the coral is generally performed by young girls, whose delicate hands are peculiarly adapted to the work. Lamartine has invested this occupation with a poetical charm, by his description of the young coral polisher, with fingers tinted by the rosy dust of the stone, and whose gentle and passionate nature he has immortalized by his unrivalled eloquence.

A few eminent painters in the middle ages, gave lustre to the Neapolitan school; but though none have, in later times, risen above mediocrity, the natives have never lacked a certain degree of artistic feeling and skill, of which the strongest evidence is at present given by the admirable manner in which they fabricate imitations of every kind of antique, from the Tuscan vases and the graceful bronzes of the Romans, to the rude coin, and the little glass tear bottles, which are found in ancient tombs.

For amateurs in art, Naples possesses many advantages. The public gallery is good, and there is no difficulty in obtaining permission to paint in it; excellent instruction may be obtained in every branch of art at a moderate charge, and the surrounding country, nay, even the city itself, presents endless subjects for picturesque, or classical designs, in landscape, architecture, and figures.

The lazzaroni, the fishermen, and the women and children of the lower orders exhibit an endless variety of character and costume. At the turning of every street, some group worthy of a painter is sure to present itself to an observing eye. The brilliance of the light cast by the glorious sunshine, the transparency of the shadows, and the beauty of the atmospheric tints, diffuse a charm over every object; and the very neglect which leaves the weeds to grow in the desolate court-yards, and parasite plants to creep in rich luxuriance over broken walls and half-ruined gateways, creates pictures which an artist would vainly search for in northern lands.

Short excursions from Naples to La Cava, Amalfi, or even Vico, will suffice to place the admirer of nature amidst an endless variety of the most beautiful scenery in the world; scenery of which English travellers in general, know little. They rarely visit Naples and its environs except in winter, when no idea can be formed of the wonderful tints of the mountains, and the richness of vegetation, by which, after the showers of spring, the dry stone walls, the arid vineyard, and the lofty rocks, are festooned with verdure, the fields enamelled with flowers, and the whole country converted into a luxuriant paradise, illumined by a sky which imparts a brilliance and transparency of colouring to every object, which no artist's skill can imitate.

Vianelli, a native artist, striking out a manner of his own, has found an endless subject for his pencil, in the representation of the habits and manners of the monks. On excellent terms with many of the holy fraternity, he has frequently been for weeks a guest in provincial monasteries, where he not only observed the

customs of their inmates, but enriched his portfolio with sketches of these recluses, in all the various avocations, domestic and spiritual, which fill up the monotonous tenor of their existence.

Possessed both of taste and fancy, united with great artistic skill, he gives at the same time the most faithful and picturesque representations of the kitchens, the refectories, the cells and the churches in which the lives of the monks are passed, as well as of their different costumes, for most of them are very willing to be painted. Those who have renounced all the vanities of the world, still retain the weakness of liking to have their portraits taken.

We have even known an instance, when a begging nun, who went weekly round to collect charity for her convent, was persuaded, by a few judicious compliments and an increased contribution to her purse, to sit to a Neapolitan for her picture, in her religious garments. But an Englishman, being a Protestant, would find it impossible to obtain such a favour; and few

of my countrymen are ever received here by the natives with that simple, friendly kindness and hospitality with which they treat old friends, even when foreigners, if they are masters of their dialect; and in character, bear some resemblance to their own joyous, warm-hearted frankness.

CHAPTER XI.

A fête at Pompeii — Virtues of the Neapolitans — Female servants — A visit—A house-top — Moonlight—Prisons—An eruption of Vesuvius.

DURING our residence in Naples we were frequently accompanied in our rambles through the city and its environs by a foreign friend, who knew the country and its inhabitants better than any native could have done, for he had previously resided there nearly twenty years, and during that time had completely identified himself with the people. He entered into their amusements and their humour as if he had been born amongst them.

He was well known in Pompeii, having passed several months in a farm-house there, whilst the cholera was raging in Naples; and when he went with us to the ruined city, he was no sooner recognized by one of the guardians of the place, than the news of his arrival spread rapidly, and he was received with the warmest and most joyful expressions of welcome by all those who lived in or near it. Some shook hands with him, some embraced him, and others actually kissed him; whilst many a merry joke was exchanged between the women and Don Antonio, as they called him.

But we ceased to wonder at the pleasure which the return of our friend had excited, when he related to us, that on a fête day, which had occurred during his former residence there, when crowds of peasants flocked from the surrounding country to wander amongst the ancient streets of Pompeii, and to dance and amuse themselves with various games on the open ground before the Temple of Jupiter, he had not only taken an active part in their revels, but had

caused two barrels of wine to be brought there at his expense, and served out to all the assembly.

The cost of this was very little in his estimation, for the common wine of Vesuvius is wonderfully cheap, but such generosity was marvellous in the eyes of these poor and simple people; it was an event in their lives never to be forgotten; and the generosity and gaiety o Don Antonio, long gratefully remembered, was requited many years afterwards, by the proofs of attachment he that day received.

Nor was it in the ruined city alone that our friend found a heartfelt welcome. Wherever he had been previously known, both men and women testified, by their kindness and simple hospitality, that their feelings of affection were not only warm, but lasting. Unlike the ordinary professions of common acquaintances in more polished life, the feelings of the Neapolitans are expressed with veracity, and yet their faithful attachment may be truly counted upon during long years of absence.

Having spoken frankly of the faults of the Neapolitan character, it is, we think, our duty to give testimony in their favour, when our own experience has proved the truth of it, being perfectly convinced that this half-civilized people has very frequently been unjustly condemned by travellers who did not possess even a superficial knowledge of them. They may have suffered from the petty vices of those who administer to the wants of strangers for profit, but they have had no access to domestic life in Naples, and know nothing of the noble and unwavering sentiments of devotion and affection there often manifested, both by rich and poor, towards those who have treated them with kindness, or received their services with gratitude.

We have known men who have allowed themselves to be conducted to prison, to shield the objects of their honest attachment from persecution. We have known delicate women, who have made and fulfilled religious vows of the most difficult observances, in the hope of

saving those they loved from disease or death; and many wives, who, in the late troubled times, have endured the extreme of suffering, deprivation, and insult, in defence of their imprisoned husbands, and for the maintenance of the children, whom their father's unjust arrest had left solely dependent for the means of existence upon a mother's exertions.

We have seen female servants cling like protecting angels to such families in the day of misfortune. We have seen them in better times give up all connexion with their own relatives, and all hopes of marriage, to devote themselves to the children they had nursed, with whom their interests had become identified, and with whose superior refinement their own naturally noble mind had more sympathy than with their uneducated equals.

There is something indescribably grand in some of these Italian serving-women. We have known one, who, though unable to read or write, possessed a natural dignity and elevation of mind rare in any class. Her strong intellect

kept her passions in check; quiet, unobtrusive, devoted, and unselfish, she served without servility, and unconsciously governed where she served.

It is one of the remarkable features of this half-civilized country, that the fine qualities of the human character, where they do exist, find fuller development than in a nation of trade and traffic. The inhabitants of the provinces are indeed generally free from all petty vices and deceits, so common amongst the degraded lazzaroni of the city. Though in their wild life, and from the utter want of education, the violence of their passions is left without restraint, and crime is of frequent occurrence, it is never accompanied by such circumstances of brutality as disgrace the records of the London police, but has a character of half-savage grandeur, as if to prove that there are noble elements in the genuine Neapolitan, which require only a good government, and a religion emancipated from spiritual tyranny and superstition, to effect their healthy development, and to prove the fitness of

this ill-used people for the enjoyment of legal and rational liberty.

We invariably met with the kindest reception when conducted by our friend to the houses of his Neapolitan acquaintance. However humble might be the appointments of the establishment, our presence caused no restraint, and only seemed to add to the gaiety of the family circle on which we intruded.

The streets of Naples are in general narrow and noisy, and the air is impregnated with such unpleasant odours, especially during the heats of summer, that to escape from all these inconveniences, the best families usually reside in the upper stories of the lofty houses.

When going one evening with Don Antonio to visit a gentleman who held an honourable appointment from the king, I was surprised to find that, after I had left the street and entered a vast and gloomy building, I was conducted up a narrow stone staircase, which, only dimly lighted, appeared interminable: but it was in vain I murmured; on and on we went, only

pausing occasionally to take breath, until we had gained the seventh story, which was occupied by the proprietor, whom we came there to visit.

His apartment was small and inconvenient, according to our English ideas, and his wife assured us that she rarely descended into the city except to go to church, being contented to enjoy the fresh air on the roof of the house, which during summer was ornamented with pots of flowers and shrubs, so as to supply the want of a garden. The gentleman showed us, with much exultation, a dining-room he had recently arranged, in exact imitation of one of the chambers in Pompeii, and opening a door from it, led us out upon the house-top. It was entirely flat, and extended over the whole of the large quadrangular building on which we stood, in the centre of which, far beneath, was a garden planted with trees, and these faintly lighted with scattered lamps.

The whole had once been a monastery, but converted to various uses by its present pro-

prietor. He pointed out a distant part of it, then a beer brewery, and we heard the songs of the Swiss soldiers in the garden beneath, who were seated around tables in the open air, enjoying their favourite beverage in a place which had a little time before been dedicated to fasting and prayer, and where, if similar pleasures had then been enjoyed, they were clothed in a mantle of silence and hypocrisy.

These northern songs broke strangely even then upon the silence of the night, and the glimpses we caught of military uniforms in the rays of the lamps and candles which flitted around them, and threw a yellow glare over the leaves of the motionless trees beneath which the soldiers sat, painfully recalled to our minds that these men were only privileged to enjoy their gross pleasure at the expense of the oppressed inhabitants of Naples; and that whilst the Swiss guards were carousing and basking in the favour of the king, the wretched people, whom it was their duty to keep in the vilest state of subjec-

tion, were enduring all the calamities which military tyranny can inflict.

But from our elevated position in the very centre of the city, we commanded a view of many objects more agreeable to contemplate than these foreign mercenaries; and we forgot even the horrors they have perpetrated in Naples, as we beheld the moon rising in cloudless glory behind the mountains, and saw her silver rays fringing the edges of the towers, and palace-roofs and lofty houses which extended far beneath us, along the margin of the bay, and up the sides of the swelling hills, even to the very base of Vesuvius. Before long, the rippled waters of the Mediterranean glittered like dancing stars in the beams of the ascending moon. It was almost as clear as day, only that the light was bluer and more calm than that of the sun, but every object for many miles around us was as distinctly visible as at noonday.

The old fortresses of St. Elmo and Castel Nuovo stood out in strong relief of light and shade from amongst the smaller buildings which

were clustered like slaves around them. When my eye rested on these prisons, I felt as if their solid masses threw a gloom over the whole beautiful scene, which only a moment before I had contemplated with unmixed delight. I looked in imagination through their heavy walls, deep down into the dungeons beneath the sea, where thousands of suffering captives were then lying in darkness, and had been in darkness, and solitude, and suffering, some for months, and many for years, never more, perhaps, to behold the light of day, nor the glories of a southern night; never more to see the sun nor the stars in heaven; never more to look upon their own beautiful country, nor to hear the voices of friends and kindred speaking words of sympathy in their own language.

And all this needless misery is wantonly inflicted by those who call themselves religious, enlightened, and humane, for a mere difference of political opinion.

My heart throbbed with indignation when

my companions pointed out to me the numerous other prisons of the city, and told me that all were thronged with captives, the poor, helpless victims of omnipotent fanaticism and revenge. Law is now powerless to defend the innocent against the arbitrary will of the sovereign and of the advisers round the throne, who are influenced by no principle but the desire of the firm establishment of their own power. It is little matter to them if half the nation perish in the struggle with oppression, provided they remain at last the masters of the situation; for they anticipate that not only the fate of Naples will be decided by the victory, but that the triumph of their party in other countries will be for ever lost or secured by the event of their struggle with this persecuted people.

Yet society was then externally as tranquil there as the scene which we were looking on, where the greatest feature was the mountain of Vesuvius rising between us and the moon, in deep purple shadow. A light vapour hung

around its summit, as motionless as the volcano itself, which seemed to slumber in the stillness of the night. But suddenly a dense volume of smoke burst from the crater, and vivid flames shot up in rapid succession, replacing the calm light of the moon by the glare of lurid fire, proving that the tranquillity of the volcano, like that of an oppressed people, is at no time to be depended on.

It was the first time we had seen such an ebullition from the crater, and we were deeply impressed by the grandeur of the spectacle, which was enhanced by its wild contrast with the calm blue moonlight, which the flames only partially replaced by their ghastly glare. Perhaps, too, the consciousness of the mighty power hidden in the earth beneath us, of which this fire was only a feeble evidence, increased the awe we felt, whilst gazing on a scene so new to us.

The Neapolitans themselves looked with an nterest almost equal to our own upon this brief eruption of Vesuvius, nor did any of the

party re-enter the house till the flames had ceased to arise, and the summit of the volcano again became invisible in a dense veil of heavy smoke.

CHAPTER XII.

The two models—The young assassin—Maternal love—Love of vengeance—The fate of a constable—A recent murderer — Hired bravoes — Poison and duelling.

An old, heavy, half savage-looking man may be seen lounging or sleeping in the sun before the houses of the Chiaja, or begging of the strangers as they come forth from their hotels into the gay promenade of the Villa Reale. He is clothed in the dirty, coarse blue cloth dress of the peasantry, with a rough sheep's-skin on his back, by way of a mantle, whilst, instead of stockings, his legs are cased in untanned leather, wrapped round with cords. His high, conical hat is of

coarse old beaver, and there is no appearance of his enjoying the luxury of a shirt.

Sometimes he carries a huge staff in his hand, at others he pretends to play upon a mountain clarionet, a wild, harsh instrument, from whence, however, the natives of Calabria frequently draw the softest and most melodious notes, before the images or pictures of the Virgin. But this tattered beggar has evidently no melody in his composition, and when chance favours him, he gladly resorts to other means to add to his scanty gains. For a small hire he frequently plays the part of an artist's model; but though his dress, from its wildness, is picturesque, its colours are neither bright nor agreeable for a painter, and his dark, inexpressive face is not a subject for study. To make up for his own deficiencies, he now frequently brings to the city with him a daughter, whose youth and gay-coloured costume are more desirable models, and latterly his wife has been his almost daily companion.

Anxious to add a sketch of these perfectly

natural figures to our portfolio, we engaged them both to sit to us, though certainly, upon a near inspection, it was not without some unpleasant feelings that we saw them enter our chamber and seat themselves on our chairs. It was absolutely necessary to be a most zealous devotee of art to forget, in our love of the picturesque, the dirt of these miserable creatures. The man was obtuse and stupid, yet cunning withal, and failed not to put in practice his rude arts and flattery, in order to obtain from us, if possible, double the sum he was paid by the Neapolitan artists.

The woman was attired in a very pretty but dirty costume of many colours, with a laced boddice and a folded linen head-cloth, forming a square above her forehead, so as to protect her eyes from the sun. She was evidently worn thin by toil and want; but though no longer young, her features were fine, delicate, and almost of a noble cast, yet they were deeply sad. Hour after hour she sat before us, without uttering a syllable, even to her husband, or

changing her position in the slightest degree, with her eyes fixed on the walls with the same unvarying expression of hopeless misery. She seemed to take no interest in our proceedings—in fact, to be unconscious where she was, or wherefore she was there; and if she thought at all, her thoughts were evidently engaged by some object far away.

When we at length ordered food and wine to be set before them, we observed that she at first ate greedily, but suddenly she checked herself; she muttered something to her husband, in a low voice, and quickly wrapped the remaining portion of her meal in a tattered cloth she drew forth from her pocket.

The old man laughed and shrugged his shoulders, but he paid no further attention to her proposition, whatever it might have been, and he emptied the bottle and dishes before him, with the delight of one who was evidently little accustomed to partake of such good cheer. His wife brushed a tear from her eye as she watched him, and then, with a deep sigh, turned

away and resumed her former place without uttering a word. The husband well knew what she meant; but he was in no humour to deny himself a good meal, and in the enjoyment of a bottle of wine, he forgot the misfortune that weighed down his poor wife to the earth.

We afterwards learnt that their only son was at that time in the galleys for assassination, where the condemned criminals are compelled to perform labours the most severe, whilst they are scarcely allowed sufficient nourishment to sustain life. The feeble and delicate, who have no friends to afford them aid, commonly die ere the term of their punishment is concluded; the strong and daring, and the most desperate, who have commonly associates at large, fail not to live in plenty, by means of the daily gifts conveyed to them, and return to society hardened instead of reformed, by their years of captivity and toil, and public exposure.

The poor mother well knew the sufferings of her son; and however criminal he might be in the eye of the law, she only felt that he was her

child. Every farthing she could earn, every crust she could spare from her scanty meals, she carried daily to him; and when the chained convicts, returning from their labour, were marched two and two towards their prison, she was ever waiting by the wayside to give her scanty savings to the half-famished convict.

We are no sentimental sympathizers with crime, but the story of this young man deeply moved our compassion. He was, as we have said, an only son; he had been his mother's pride and joy, and we were assured he was of a brave, generous, and noble nature, but entirely uneducated. He grew up without his moral feelings receiving other direction or light than such as his ignorant parents could bestow, and their influence was rather for evil than for good. His virtues, even, were passions, and his conduct the wild result of natural ungoverned impulse.

Two peasants, or rather banditti of his neighbourhood, of the worst class, conceived a bitter enmity against one of their associates, but unwilling to incur the danger of assassinating the

object of their hatred, they agreed to make this unfortunate young man the tool of their vengeance. They excited a quarrel between him and their intended victim, and seized the moment of excited passion to persuade him that nothing but blood could wash out the stain of the insults he had received. The youth listened; he believed, and in an evil moment he obeyed. He planted a knife in the heart of his adversary, at the instigation of these subtle fiends, and was condemned to many years of hard labour in the galleys, whilst those who were the cause of his crime, walk at liberty through the streets of Naples.

Men of similar character, but of greater daring, have been pointed out to us, lounging in the vicinity of the wine-houses; with their great cloth mantles thrown like a drapery over one arm and shoulder; who were said to have committed more than a dozen assassinations. They have either found means, by powerful protection, to elude all punishment, or have come forth at the expiration of a term, from the gal-

leys, more than ever hardened and irritated against society, to recommence their course of crime. They set little value on their own lives, or the lives of others; and when they have obtained absolution from their priest, are troubled by no stings of conscience.

Both in town and country, revenge is considered, as with savages, a positive duty, and it is a thirst never to be slaked, till the offended party has shed the blood of his enemy.

A poor man who filled the office of a kind of constable, had, in a village south of Naples, to put in execution an unwelcome judgment of the law against one of his neighbours. This man was obliged to submit, but he vowed revenge, not against those who had condemned him, but against the poor fellow who had only done his duty, in executing the mandates of the law.

"Woe to him!" he said, "if ever he ventures to leave his house after set of sun."

The constable, who knew that such words were not uttered as a mere empty threat, took

warning, and for two years was never known to pass his threshold after the twenty-fourth hour.

It was a hot summer's night, and overcome with thirst, he asked his wife to bring him a cup of water, as he feared to venture out in search of it. But when she told him that it only stood on the outer ledge of the window, he arose, opened the shutter, and put out his head in search of the pitcher. Before he could reach it a ball passed through his forehead, and he fell dead at the feet of his wife.

Two whole years must the assassin, under the influence of the same diabolical passion, have preserved, unwavering, his horrible lust for murder; and for two whole years he must have watched night after night, to be able to avail himself, as in this instance, of some momentary forgetfulness on the part of his victim. Nor are the crimes confined to the laity in the kingdom of Naples.

A priest was condemned to death some years ago, by the civil tribunal at Salerno; but many

doubted whether the sentence would be confirmed by the Council of Bishops, in which is now vested the power of final judgment, with regard to all members of the clergy.

It came out upon this man's trial, that a person of his acquaintance had proposed to him to assassinate one of his neighbours, who had given him some offence, and offered to pay him thirty piastres, or about six pounds sterling, for the deed.

He readily agreed to undertake the task, and received the money; but instead of fulfilling his engagement, he immediately hastened to the house of his intended victim, confided to him the desire of his enemy, and the commission he had engaged to perform, and finished by bluntly demanding what he was to do under such circumstances.

"Murder your employer, instead of me," was the reply, "and I promise to pay you sixty piastres more, when you bring me some positive proof that you have dispatched him."

The priest, with many promises, departed,

Only a short time elapsed, before he found an opportunity of enticing his first tempter to a lonely place amongst the hills, and there murdered him. To convince his second employer of the death of his enemy, he produced from his waistcoat pocket, for his recognition, the bloody ear cut from the head of his victim.

The gentleman recoiled with horror, but he paid the money; and during many years the whole affair appeared to be buried in oblivion.

But it was impossible that the instigator of this crime could die in peace. On his death-bed, conscience regained its dominion, and sought relief in confession. The part the priest had acted as his agent thus became known, and led to his arrest, trial, and condemnation.

We make no comments on this history, nor on the laws under which the punishment of the assassin was placed in the power of the clergy to enforce or remit.

The rich are well known, not only to resort in this manner to assassination, by the aid of purchased bravoes, but also to employ the more

subtle means of poison, to get rid of a rival in intrigue or ambition.

In the highest circles, if a son makes a marriage against the will of his parents, the wife has been known to die, under circumstances so suspicious, that the widower has ever after absented himself from his paternal home. Indeed there can be no doubt, that the unbridled indulgence of the passions in every class, leads to numerous crimes and deaths, though they escape the observation of the police, which takes little heed of any but political delinquencies.

Duelling was, some time ago, of such frequent occurrence, as to arouse the attention of the government, and it is now strictly forbidden. He who sends a challenge, if he be in the civil employment of the state, is deprived of his office, and banished from the city; if he belongs to the army, he is cashiered. Should a duel take place, without proving fatal, the parties concerned are all sent to the galleys for four years; but should death be the consequence, the survivor is invariably executed.

Four young men of the highest families in Naples, recently worked a considerable time in chains on the high road, in expiation of such an offence, until the king passing by, one of them threw a petition to his majesty, which procured their pardon and restoration to society.

Such a law appears, at first sight, an admirable means of preventing bloodshed, amongst a people so irritable as the Neapolitans; but, on further consideration, it is to be feared that the practice of secret assassination may thus be much increased, and that when no honourable and open means of redress for an insult remain, recourse may be had to the stiletto.

CHAPTER XIII.

Bagpipes—Preparation for Christmas—Holy images—The fête of the dead—Dead bodies exhibited—Levity—The Evil Eye—Miracle—Superstition—Nuns—A scene in a monastery—A death-bed—The priest of Lecco—His falsehood—His victim.

We have always listened with pleasure to the mournful bagpipes of the ragged Calabrians, who come from their mountains at the approach of Christmas, to play and sing a melancholy hymn before the numerous images of the Virgin and Child which are to be seen at the corner of every street.

But it is neither piety nor joy which inspires their plaintive music; they are paid for the season by the proprietor of each house, which is

protected and sanctified by a representation of the Holy Mary.

No doubt these poor minstrels have for many generations performed in her honour the same wild lament on their monotonous instruments, accompanied by a yet more monotonous song.

Yet this antique music of the middle ages has a depth of feeling in its quaint melody, that goes directly to the heart; and when heard in the dusky stillness of evening, its simple notes of almost painful sadness, have more power to awaken profound emotion, than all the studied difficulties of modern compositions.

When the shepherds have played before all the representations of the Holy Family in the churches, they return again to their mountains, not to revisit the city till another Christmas approaches.

During the same time that the mournful bagpipes resound through the streets, every quarter of the city is ornamented for the coming fête of Christmas.

Shops and stalls for confectionery make a most brilliant appearance. Festoons and garlands of flowers surround the sugar images of the Holy Child; the ass, the ox, and the three kings are on a thousand stalls, and the consumption of these favourite articles, which are all made to be eaten, exceeds all calculation.

The churches display the greatest splendour. Holy images, the size of life, are exhibited for the admiration of the people, and Virgins in satin gowns and gold tinsel, delight the ignorant populace.

All this amusement is scarcely past when the Carnival begins, that scene of fun and folly, of wit and good-nature, where all the qualities for which the Neapolitans are most remarkable, are exhibited in the broadest manner. All distinctions of rank are forgotten by the masks, and the beggar and the noble exchange even practical jokes, without the slightest offence being given.

In strange contrast to this joyful festivity, is the fête of the dead, long a favourite celebration

with the Neapolitans, who, to prepare themselves for the resurrection, make a kind of rehearsal of it once a year.

At the moment of sunrise, the bells of all the churches begin to ring, and at the same moment the dead, who have been preserved in graves within the churches during the year, are suddenly taken from their resting-places. Against the walls of a church hung with black, these awful figures are ranged, dressed out in all the rich and gay attire in which they were decked for interment.

It is awful to hear the noise of the living throng, and see their eagerness to get a sight of these solemn corpses, which, clothed from head to foot in shoes, boots, and gloves, are wonderfully preserved. Yet, though some are almost as fresh as at the time of their decease, others present fearful signs of corruption.

Their name and the day of their death are written on a little board, placed above the head of each; and we were really less disgusted by

the ghastly spectacle, than by the volatile chattering and screaming of the crowd, who laughed and joked in the presence of the dead, in the same light manner I had heard in the market-place. They seemed to delight in discovering the remains of their relations; not content with looking, they frequently touched them, and made the most extraordinary observations and jokes on their appearance.

Crowd followed crowd to witness this spectacle during the whole of the day, and at times the guards were necessary to prevent dangerous disputes, till finally, at the close of evening, the dead were once more laid to rest.

How long must a people have been degraded by the oppression both of church and state, before they can take indecent delight in such a spectacle?

But the priests have spread their nets over the whole people, and treat them as children, who are to be either amused or compelled, by a system of terror, to subjection. Whilst they distract, by their festivals, the attention of the

Neapolitans from their political interests, they offer their indulgences and absolutions, to be won in a variety of ways by devotees, but all bringing money to the church.

At one place there is a sacred staircase to be ascended on the knees, in order to escape from purgatory for many hundred years. In another, there is a passage which sinners are to pass through hopping on one leg, or creeping on all fours, to be absolved from all minor sins; and frequently a penitent is condemned to enter one of the white or black brotherhoods, those associations into which the better classes of the citizens of Naples are divided, and who, employed to conduct funerals, attend to the poor, and reconcile disagreements, are authorized to meddle in everybody's affairs, and thus made lay servants, or rather spies and slaves of the church, whose power they extend into every nook and corner of the social system. One consequence of such a religion is, not only that the peasantry are, as we have related, in the most abject state of ignorant superstition, but

that the great mass of the people in the capital are not more enlightened.

Priests, nuns, sorcerers, and, in fact, all who form pretensions to superior piety, or a knowledge of the black art, and are supposed to be gifted with powers of divination, find ample employment for their prophetic faculties. Women, in all cases of sickness and danger, resort to innumerable charms to divert the threatened calamity, which are often sold to them even by nuns, who make a trade of their trusting faith.

The belief in the evil eye is wonderfully general. A gentleman of talent and instruction, confessed to me, with some confusion, that though he had not quite made up his mind as to the truth of the common idea that there were persons whose fixed glance could insure the misfortune, and even the death of the person against whom it was directed, he was perfectly convinced that there were others whose presence had an evil influence on all who had the misfortune to find themselves in their company; and that when, by an intuitive feeling, he was

warned of the proximity of such a one, he never failed to defend himself from the consequences, by making use of the prescribed charm against their power. This is neither more nor less than to stick out the first and fourth fingers, whilst the second and third are folded beneath the palm of the hand; nay, even a miniature model in this form, or a small spike of coral, is considered sufficient to defend the wearer from the evil eye; and few are without one of these spells against misfortune.

It is a common thing for the women to cut off their long and beautiful hair as a votive offering to the Virgin, which they have vowed in moments of deep affliction; and under the same excitement, the most extraordinary tasks are frequently undertaken, to propitiate some favourite saint.

A gentleman, during our residence in Naples, went regularly three times a week to shave the beards of the sick in the Hospital of the Incurables; though whether to expiate a sin or avert an affliction, we could not learn.

Miracles are still of as frequent occurrence here, and are as firmly believed, as in the middle ages. Every year, on the morning after Christmas-day, the king proceeds, with other members of his family, in state to the church of St. Maria del Carmine, near the market-place, rendered famous by the revolt of Massaniello. In this sacred building is an image of the Crucifixion, which is usually covered, so as to conceal it from the eyes of the vulgar. On this day alone the veil is removed by the archbishop in the presence of the king, when the noble ecclesiastic cuts a lock of hair, about two inches long, from one side of the head of the image. When this is again uncovered on the following year by the same personage, it is invariably found that the hair has grown again to its former length; and on this announcement of the miracle, a hundred cannon from the different fortresses of the city proclaim it to the delighted people, while fire-works of every description are let off by the pious before the gates of the church.

The old miracle of the liquefaction of the

blood of St. Gennaro, three times a year, when placed before the head of the saint, is still in full activity; it is celebrated by priestly deceivers, with all the pomp of olden times. The people behold it with undiminished astonishment and delight. When the miracle succeeds, the wildest joy is still expressed in the whole city, by the deafening clang of bells, and beating of drums, whilst all the garrison parade on the occasion. Squibs, and crackers, and pistols keep up a continual bombardment in every street, for the Neapolitans have an especial delight in noise and gunpowder, and the shouting of the lazzaroni completes the confusion. The melted blood is carried in a procession through the streets; all kneel and pray as it passes; but in half an hour afterwards, the crowd are thinking of nothing but eating and drinking, and singing, and enjoying themselves.

Once, in obedience to the priests, during the reign of Murat, the miraculous blood remained obstinately hard, which the people were given to understand was in consequen

of the saint's detestation of the newly-established government of the French. Loud clamour and tumults ensued, and the city was menaced with insurrection; when Murat, with all dispatch, sent half-a-dozen cannon to be planted against the cathedral, and at the same time caused an intimation to be given to the priests who were there officiating, that if the blood of St. Gennaro did not immediately melt as usual, in less than five minutes the whole building should be brought to the ground by a discharge of artillery. Preparations were actually made to this effect; but before they could be completed, the relenting saint proved propitious, and tranquillity was restored amongst the populace.

The people believe the truth of these wonders with their whole heart. Superstition is to them a second life, and a support in place of the consolations of scripture, amidst the many heavy sufferings to which they are exposed in their wretched state. The money spent even by the poor for gunpowder, and all sorts of fireworks to discharge in honour of their favourite

saints, surpasses belief. We have frequently been awakened in the middle of the night by the report of guns and cannon, fired for no better purpose; and during the festival of Christmas, an ignorant listener might readily believe that an enemy was actually bombarding the city.

To attempt to talk reason on such subjects, is at once to expose yourself to the stigma of heresy; and it is said that nothing, except the suppression of the lotto, would be more likely to produce a rebellion in Naples, than the prevention by the police of this noisy rejoicing.

At nine o'clock on the evening of New Year's Day, the whole quay of St. Lucie was lighted up by fireworks, torches, and flaring candles on the stalls and at the windows of the shops and houses; whilst the report of petards was incessant. Hundreds of men, women, and children thronged the wide space between the sea and the houses; when suddenly, from the parish church on the slope of the hill, towards the palace, issued a procession of about thirty

priests and boys, clothed in white from head to foot, with holes in the linen for their eyes, that increased the spectral appearance of their figures, as they glided along, bearing torches in their hands.

One alone, dressed in black with a mitre on his head, walked in the centre of this group, under a gilded canopy, bearing a small white image of the Saviour. A band of music formed a part of the procession, and the shouts of the noisy multitude (without exception the most noisy in Europe) accompanied the pageant.

Men and children ran before, behind, and around, discharging a perpetual volley of squibs and crackers on every side of the priests, who nevertheless steadily pursued their way to the front of the little ancient church of St. Lucia, which having reached, they turned and retraced their steps to the holy edifice from whence they came.

An immense crowd of all classes had in the meanwhile there assembled to receive the precious image, which was borne with the utmost

solemnity to the high altar. The officiating priest there held it up to the public gaze, crying, "Behold the Saviour!" One after another, the whole congregation in the crowded building then passed the altar, and knelt and kissed this waxen divinity.

We saw a silver bust of St. Anthony, a few days ago, paraded through the parish of which this saint is the patron. At the corner of every street a row of little cannons was placed, which were discharged as the procession passed; whilst fires blazed in all directions, and the women, leaning from their windows, threw down grans, somewhat less than English halfpence, to the priests. In fact, all the money given to the poor in other countries is here bestowed upon the clergy, either under the false pretence of charity, or for their own use. There are monasteries and nunneries without end, supported by begging.

There is one convent near the Chiaja, containing two hundred nuns, of whom ten in rotation go begging daily for the establishment,

and who receive the smallest sums with gratitude.

I asked an Italian artist, who told me he had a weekly visit from one of this sisterhood, how much he gave each time?

"A gran," he said; "I cannot do more. I have a family to support by my profession, and I have many such visits."

The principals of religious establishments thus maintained, are required to set three dishes on the table at dinner, and two at supper, before their monks and nuns; and if, by any hazard, a portion of this appointed fare is wanting, the utmost discontent is excited, and loudly expressed by the members of the society.

In the country monasteries, the brethren are extremely courteous and hospitable to strangers who take up their residence with them for a time, especially if furnished with a recommendation; it being always understood, that such visitors pay at their pleasure for the accommodation they receive. Artists frequently fix themselves for a time in these establishments, when on

professional excursions in the interior of the kingdom; and if of a sociable and agreeable character, they are joyfully welcomed by the brethren, who often make them the confidants of many a merry tale and ludicrous adventure, not always calculated for modest ears.

A friend of ours, who has in this manner spent much time in the neighbourhood of Pæstum, on a recent visit proceeded in quest of accommodation to the same monastery where he had previously lodged. As an illustration of these fraternities, I will give the narrative he recounted to us of his adventures there, in his own words as nearly as possible.

"The porter who answered my summons at the gate," he began, "was an old acquaintance, who the moment he recognized me, assured me I could not have arrived at a more fortunate moment.

"'There is one of the fraternity dead to-day,' he added, 'and you have just come in time to partake of our good cheer.'

"However such an announcement might have

appeared extraordinary to a stranger, it excited no surprise in my mind, for I well knew the custom prevalent in the monasteries throughout the kingdom, of sending information of the death of a brother, to every religious establishment of the same order in the province; when a mass is celebrated for the soul of the departed, and an additional dish and bottle of wine are served at supper to refresh the throats and stomachs of the monks, after the fatigues of the double labours of the day. Nor must it be supposed that this bottle is of ordinary dimensions, but an enormous flask, which a man could scarcely embrace in his extended arms.

"The prognostications of the porter proved just, and I spent a merry afternoon in the company of my old acquaintance; and after having made an excellent supper together, we sat down to finish the evening in the refectory in separate parties, each sympathetic pair having a bottle between them. My associate was a healthy, rosy-faced fellow, whose brown gown and sandals had not subdued his love of good

cheer and pleasant company; and moreover he was particularly addicted to the enjoyment of a pipe!

"Alternately smoking, and sipping his wine, as he listened and responded to the jests of the company, the time glided rapidly away, till all the rest of the society had retired to their dormitories for the night, and we alone remained with our bottle and our tobacco. Freed from observation, and animated by the effects of the good cheer, our conversation became more unrestrained, and the worthy father was laughing till the tears trickled over his cheeks, when a loud ringing at the gate suddenly arrested his mirth.

"'In the name of Francis!' he cried, 'what is coming here? A malediction on them all, that they cannot leave a poor man in peace half an hour together.'

"'What can be the matter? what can they want at such an hour?' I demanded.

"'Me, to be sure,' answered the Franciscan. 'Would to the saints I had only been in my

bed, for it is always he who is last up, must go to visit the dying; and I warrant it is some poor wretch on the point of departing for the next world, who wants a priest to shrive his soul. Pong—pong—pong—cannot you have patience till I have finished my glass? But I must go—I must, indeed; there is no help for it, though, in truth, I have no taste for crossing the hills this dark night, with no better companion than the poor peasant who has come in search of me. You must keep me company—by St. Francis, you must!'

"I confess, I found myself so comfortable after the good cheer of the evening, that I was even more provoked than the monk at such an interruption of our enjoyment; but as he stood waiting for me with the candle in his hand, before he proceeded to answer the third peal at the bell, and I well knew that, in spite of his portly person, his cowardice was extreme, I had no alternative but to accompany him.

"'Come, then, come,' he cried, as soon as he had learnt my consent; 'you will take your

stick and I my crucifix, and we will do the best we can. Follow me.'

"As the monk had expected, we found a poor half-starved peasant boy at the gate, who informed us that his mother was at the point of death, and required the presence of a priest. The good man shrugged his shoulders; to refuse the petition was impossible, and we accordingly sallied forth, each of us carrying a lantern, and my companion doubly armed with his cross and his pipe.

"The night was dark; so dark, that we could d'stinguish but little of the surrounding country, though the friar, who well knew, by previous attacks on his brethren, that the by-roads were infested by robbers, cast many an anxious glance around, as the tall grass rustled in the wind. After walking nearly a mile and a half, we arrived at a wretched village amongst the hills. We had then to clamber up a broken bank to the abode of the dying woman, which stood at a considerable distance from all the other cottages.

"I shall never forget the scene which we discovered there. Half excavated in the rock, half built up with rude stones, the hovel more resembled the den of wild beasts than the home of a human being. Its filth and gloom were perfectly revolting. A small lamp threw a feeble ray over its black and rugged walls, and on the bed, where, scarcely covered with filthy rags, lay the dying woman. It was nothing but a bundle of straw. Two persons knelt beside it, with their heads buried in the coverings, and three half-famished-looking children slept on a pile of grass and leaves in another corner.

"The priest, laying down his pipe on a stone at the entrance, proceeded to perform his sacred functions. But before he began, I demanded of a man we had found in the hovel, if there was nothing could be done to alleviate the sufferings of the poor woman, who appeared in mortal agony. 'We have had a doctor,' he replied, 'but as we had no means of buying the medicines he ordered, he told us we might give her water.' And there to be sure, at her

side, stood the pitcher from which she had drank, and water was the only refreshment of any description the house contained.

"The priest then held up his cross, and proceeded to question the penitent, if she had renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; she, poor, famished creature, who had been born only to toil and to suffer. Utterly unmoved by the horror of the scene, which habit had rendered familiar to him, and without any respect for the rites he wished to impose as sacred upon others, he every four or five minutes thrust his crucifix into my hand, and rushed to the door, to refresh himself with his favourite pipe; then returning to the bed, he continued where he had left off, till he again suddenly gave me the crucifix, and hurried away to indulge in the luxury of another half-dozen puffs; all the while, as he passed backwards and forwards, continuing his solemn questionings. The whole ceremony passed somewhat in this manner: 'Dost thou in all sincerity and truth renounce the devil and all his works?'—Puff.

'Hast thou put away from thee all carnal desires'—puff—'and sinful indulgences?'—Puff, puff. But enough. My heart bleeds even to remember this frightful desecration of a sacred and solemn rite; and I cannot even now forget the feelings that overpowered me, when I looked on the poor dying woman, about to depart with no better preparation to meet the judgment of her Maker, and knew that even the minister of the church who had come thither ostensibly to afford her, an ignorant creature, weary and worn out by suffering and deprivation, the last comforts of religion, was watching eagerly for her soul to take flight, that he might enjoy the pleasure of his pipe without interruption, and escape from the wretched dwelling where she had dragged on years of misery, to the luxury and comfort of his monastery.

"'Why, in the name of fortune, do they not wait till the last moment before they send for us, instead of keeping one out of a warm bed, to stand shivering half the night in a damp hole like this, saying Pater Nosters?' he muttered to

me at length. I could not reply. I had thought him a good fellow till that hour; but I now learnt that under the guise of frankness and cheerfulness, the hardest heart may be hid. A monk is, in fact, cut off from all sympathy with his fellow-creatures. Want he can never know, and he pities not the necessities of others; whilst religion, with the greater number, is at best, only an empty form.

"Irritated by such conduct, and impatient at hearing the most inapplicable and unintelligible language addressed to a poor wretch in the last agonies of death, I could not help asking him if he had no better comfort to offer to this poor creature, who had never had it in her power to commit the sins against which he preached to her.

"'What can I do?' he replied; 'we must show them we are something;' and the spirit of the dying departed, and the monk resumed his pipe, and we returned together to his monastery to finish our bottle."

But, as an example of the manner in which

the low clergy mix themselves up with the concerns of the people, and lead them to evil, for their own private interest, I cannot refrain from relating one of the many stories I have heard. From the manner in which I learnt it, I entertain no doubts of its accuracy and its truth.

In a village in the province of Lecco, in the very base of the foot of Italy, and consequently far removed from the Capital ; more than twenty years ago, a young man so won the good graces of a monk, that he undertook to instruct him in reading and writing, and made many promises of aiding him in his future progress through life. Time passed on, and as a step towards his advancement, he persuaded him it was absolutely necessary for him to marry; and finally, to secure his happiness, presented him to a pretty girl, whom he advised him to make his wife.

Well pleased with the maiden, the youth agreed to all his friend advised, and accepted his services, to arrange the match. To ensure him the means of maintaining a family, the monk then offered to lend him twenty piastres to set

his wife up in a little shop in the village; and as he had taught him to write his name, he required him, just by way of an exercise, to put his signature to a receipt for the amount of the loan.

The poor fellow, with blind confidence, did all that was required of him by so kind a friend. He wrote his name, he married the maiden, and he opened a shop. A fortnight passed, and he observed that the monk's visits were very frequent at his house; suspicions of an unpleasant nature were excited in the young man's mind, and a dispute was the consequence, between him and his patron.

Two days afterwards, he was arrested by the command of the monk, and hurried away from his young wife, and the country where he was born, under a guard to Naples, for his debt of twenty piastres.

I have been assured that it is a fact, that he remained for twenty years shut up in the horrible prison in the Vicaria, which a modern writer observes, appears constructed for the purpose of

torturing, as well as confining the wretched beings whose luckless destiny brings them within its walls.

According to the established law, a creditor is obliged to maintain his debtor; and thirty carlines, or about ten shillings a month, did the monk continue to pay for twenty years, for the support of his captive victim, whilst the wife, released from the jealousy of her husband, prospered under his protection.

At length the guardian of the gaols, whose duty it is to call over the names of the prisoners at stated times, astonished to find the name of this unfortunate being was ever on the list, inquired of him the cause of his captivity.

When he learnt that his debt was of so small an amount, yet one which he was utterly unable to pay, he promised to state his case to the King. Unless the money was paid, nothing but the royal command could restore him to liberty.

Happily this merciful interference prevailed, and the captive was at length released. But old in heart and broken in spirit, he had no de-

to fulfil the high duties, or to submit to the restraints and deprivations, their profession requires.

That there are philosophical and enlightened men amongst the Catholic clergy, there can be no doubt; but they are generally regarded as free-thinkers, and, except when men of high rank, are left far behind their brethren in the path of preferment, and are only tolerated in the church, because they rival no man's pursuit of honours and dignities.

CHAPTER XIV.

Dwellings—Women—Their mode of life—Married life—Female servants.

THE ordinary abodes of Neapolitan citizens, as in Paris and other continental towns, are, in fact, apartments, where the kitchen, the bed-rooms and sitting-rooms are all on the ground floor, and communicate with a public staircase, which, though often of marble, is never cleaner than the street. As the chambers in Naples are commonly of an immense height, and the most favourite habitations are on the second and third story, it is quite possible, at the end of a series of morning visits, to have

mounted more stairs than would reach to the top of St. Paul's.

But the fourth and highest story, however great the labour of reaching it, is decidedly the most agreeable abode. You are there raised entirely above the dirt, and the noise, and the bad air of the streets, and can enjoy the breezes from the sea in all their purity: more especially if there is an open terrace on the flat roof of some lower chamber, which is almost always the case, from whence delightful views may be obtained over the bay and the mountains. Here the vine is often trained to give its shade and its fruit, and the orange tree diffuses its delicious odours the whole year long. These mimic gardens constitute one of the greatest charms of Naples; and in the warm nights of summer, when the moonbeams are almost as bright as the rays of a morning sun, they are the favourite lounging places of those who possess such a luxury.

Even the poor, who have only balconies, frequently perform much of their cooking, and

many of their household occupations, on this narrow gallery.

The ladies are rarely to be seen in the streets, and those who have no carriage remain weeks together without descending their staircases, except to go to the church or the promenade. The English habit of walking for health, is a thing of which they have no idea; and to this, no doubt, may, in a great measure, be attributed their early obesity.

To enter the dwellings of families of the higher classes of the middle ranks (people of four or five hundred a year, derived from an honourable profession, an income in Naples equivalent to double that amount in England), you are frequently obliged to cross a court, and ascend a staircase, whose abominations are not to be described, to apartments which are not many shades better. The furniture is left to go to wreck and ruin; the cleanliness that labours to put a polish upon all things, is utterly unknown. The dirty brick floors, on which every one spits at pleasure, are without carpets,

the windows and beds without curtains, and on the bare white-washed walls remain the accumulated stains of many years. To complete the picture, it has happened to us, that a huge turkey, cherished for a future Christmas dinner, has on the first floor walked in from the kitchen, whilst his companions were heard perambulating through the bed-rooms, and hopping about on the beds, at their pleasure. The fat, careless mistress of the establishment, if she have no worse pursuit, spends the greatest part of her time, when not at the theatre or the promenade, in lounging over the rails of her balcony, and gazing on the passers by, in going to church and confession, and chattering with her priests.

The very dress of these women is sufficient evidence of their idleness. No neat white cap, nor clean collar, ever betokens their attention to neatness, nor sets off their dark complexions to advantage. Their hair, moistened with common olive oil, till it becomes rancid in the hot summer, if they have no one to arrange it, remains

all day in disgusting confusion; and when they have past the years of youth, is habitually covered with the eternal coloured silk handkerchief, tied under the chin like Scotch fish-women, which appears to be the most favourite article of attire with all Neapolitan women of the middle and lower orders. A second is worn as a shawl, hiding all the deficiencies in form and fashion of her dirty gown; for these slovenly coverings have the double advantage of saving both work and washing. Of the further mysteries of the toilette we will say nothing; it is sufficient to know that they are neglected by women of every rank, in a manner that is peculiarly objectionable in a southern climate. All the luxury and even neatness of attire is reserved for the promenade, the theatre, the church, or paying visits, and on such occasions women of all classes are exorbitantly extravagant. How their fine clothes and their tickets, and carriages for the theatre are procured with their small incomes, would frequently be a mystery, were it not well known that husbands permit their

wives to accept such indulgences from their male acquaintance, or lovers, when they are either unwilling or unable to pay for them themselves.

When a girl is not married at thirteen or fourteen years of age, which now happens less frequently than formerly, she rarely fails to have a lover, when in northern countries she would be considered still a child; and the tender interest of such a connexion entirely engrosses her young mind, and all thought of further education is at an end, at the very time when its influence is the most required.

After marriage, no idea of rendering home comfortable or agreeable to their husbands ever enters the minds of the women; they seem rarely to have a sense that any duties are attached to the union they have formed. Utterly ignorant of domestic concerns, as well as of the affairs of life, the young wife too often finds that her influence over the affections of her husband is of short duration. It rarely survives the birth of her first child. Neglected and be-

trayed, and without principles to direct her course, or check the fiery passions of her nature, it can scarcely be wondered at, that a young creature, under such circumstances, listens to the advances of the first lover that pleases her fancy; and the solid happiness of her life is destroyed for ever. Her mind, engrossed by passion, her children, if she has the misfortune to have a family, are neglected and left to the care of some wretched servant, who, the confidante of her mistress's shame, however abandoned or dishonest she may be, can neither be reproved nor dismissed; the household falls into disorder, and by degrees, as the woman thus lost advances in years, she becomes callous to the stings of conscience, or the language of reproach, and pursues her course without scruple or shame.

Perhaps the husband is deceived, perhaps not, and he connives at the vices of which he set the first example. In either case, domestic peace has fled their dwelling for ever, and quarrels in many instances become frequent and

violent, in which personal chastisement is said to be often practised at the woman's expense.

When such is the common history of married life, it is no wonder that the education of the children is neglected; neglected as regards both mind and body. From the cradle to the grave, the women may be said to think of no to-morrow. The pleasure of the day, and the gratification of some momentary passion, are their sole pursuits. Their modes of thinking are totally different from the virtuous females of northern countries; and yielding to the influence of every transitory impulse, which with them is a passion, they are utterly ignorant of all those feelings of delicacy and scruples of innocence and shame, which spring from righteous principles and native modesty. Even the chaste are without those sentiments of truth and dignified virtue which awaken respect. The injured wife will breathe her sorrows to her washer-woman or her cook, with the same trusting confidence that she relates them to her friends; for though their position may be different, education has made

little distinction between her and her menials. Though decked in fine clothes, and able, perhaps, to sing or play, it is too often the case that she remains as essentially vulgar in mind and conduct as the washer-woman she chooses as her confidante.

Divorce being impossible, husbands, to save their own honour, are externally polite; and with such a sanction, society receives the most corrupted women, without questioning the character of her who has not too openly infringed its laws. Thus vice glides on unpunished and unshrinking to old age, when—if remorse is at length awakened by superstition—it benefits no other human being but the priests, from whom it seeks to purchase consolation and absolution.

We have been assured by several natives of the country, that a great part of the domestic miseries which distract its society is occasioned by the priests. Sometimes a brother, or a cousin in holy orders, thinks himself bound by his profession to meddle with the differences between man and wife, and multiplies them tenfold; but

more frequently, a confessor usurps an undue influence in the family, and either by ill directed zeal, or for his own interested views, excites jealousies and dissensions which have ever an evil termination, or undermines the virtue it was his duty to sustain.

Their power over the women is immense, and it is well known that they disapprove and speedily put a stop to all society or amusement which in the smallest degree interferes with it; though it should seem they make little use of their almost boundless influence to put any restraint on the corruption of female morals, but on the contrary, are too well known to take advantage of their position, to increase the evil in every class.

It cannot be supposed that where the rich show little respect for virtue, the poor are more rigid in their conduct; and frequently, in their case, necessity may be pleaded as an excuse for vices to which their superiors have no temptation but the force of their passions. We grieve to say, that during our residence in Naples, we

were made acquainted with details of the immoral conduct of females of the lower classes, both in town and country, of so black a dye, that it is impossible they can be repeated here; and the really worthy confessor, who in one instance was our authority, added to the frightful story he had related, that such circumstances frequently came under the knowledge of himself and his brethren in their religious calling.

As far as regards mere externals, it is not astonishing, that when it is frequently disgusting to approach young ladies of noble birth from their want of cleanliness, the wives of the lazzaroni, peasants, and poor women both of town and country, are filthy in person beyond the power of description. Their skin is fortunately of a colour on which dirt can be with difficulty distinguished; but their hair, from their earliest infancy, has properties not to be here spoken of: men, women, and children, pigs and poultry, all commonly occupy the same chamber, nay, often the same heap of straw, and in the hot season are devoured by vermin, of which

constant evidence is to be seen upon the public streets. It is too much trouble to be clean; and, except amongst the few women engaged in washing for the richer inhabitants of the city, the poorer females have fine and delicate hands, which work has never hardened.

Even female servants have little hard labour; there is no scouring of floors, and rubbing of tables, and cleaning of stairs, or bright grates, even in palaces. All such things go on from year to year undisturbed by water, or brushes. When the girls leave service and marry, after smoothing down their beds in the morning; they sit before their doors spinning with a distaff, or nursing their children, leaving their houses and their clothes uncleaned and unrepaired, till the one resembles a stable more than a human abode, and the others fall to pieces on their backs. With those who are a shade better off in the world, female vanity quickly displays itself, in the gorgeous colours of their head and neck handkerchiefs and enormous pearl, or gold earrings. The ancient costumes, probably too ex-

pensive and too troublesome, are now rarely seen in the city, except when the country nurses of the children of the rich appear on the promenades, attired in their short velvet jackets and petticoats fringed with gold, or occasionally a handsome girl from Ischia or Procida comes to make purchases in the capital. But though many such figures are said to resort to the summer fêtes in the city, modern manufactures are in all European countries rapidly destroying the ancient and picturesque costumes which once gave each a peculiar character.

Men in many departments usurp the occupations which in other countries are considered to belong to females. The cooks throughout Naples are generally men; in all the hotels, and in many private families, they supply the place of housemaids, and, in truth, where women are preferred it is most difficult to make them fulfil their required tasks. They will do nothing but what is absolutely necessary, and care for no gains, except those indispensable to procure the bare means of existence.

Rich, the Neapolitan women are the slaves of luxury, idleness, pride, and passion; poor, they are the victims of sloth, and dirt, and misery. Yet in both classes there are bright exceptions to be found. We ourselves have seen examples of serving women, endowed with a moral purity and loftiness of character, that is rare in any country, and doubly beautiful when found amongst the ignorant, the superstitious, and unprincipled. It has been our happiness to know that there are in the higher ranks, bright patterns of virtuous and devoted wives to most abandoned husbands, whose noble hearts and honourable natures remain uncorrupted amidst the general vice, though it is deeply to be regretted that they are too rare to have any influence on the general character or well-being of the society by which they are surrounded.

CHAPTER XV.

The climate—Want of social amusements— Meagre entertainments — Great families — Poverty—Noble plate stealers — Lodgings — Marchionesses — Spare diet—Christmas fare—Eels—Pig market—Peasants' fare—Walking dinners—Eating houses.

THE climate and scenery of Naples have both a gaiety even in winter, which is full of charms to a stranger; but that perpetual round of social amusements which is called gaiety in Paris and London, is certainly not here to be found. To those who are presented at court, certain great houses and balls are open, but the Italians generally give few entertainments amongst

themselves. The expense is too great, and the small circle which can be received in an opera box is more to their taste, as there the ladies have less rivalry to fear, and can indulge in a latitude of conversation which in larger assemblies would be impossible. When they do give parties, or receive their friends on stated evenings, once a week, it frequently happens that no refreshments whatever are offered to the guests. Sugar and water, or weak wine and water, are exceptions rather than the ordinary fare of such entertainments, where the ladies may sing, or dance till midnight, without breaking their fast, except some elderly gentleman, gallantly disposed, produces a store of bon-bons from his pocket for the benefit of his friends.

Although, in many respects, the number of strangers who annually resort to Naples, have introduced an appearance of luxury with which all the natives are eager externally to vie, foreign example has yet produced little effect on the private arrangements of their domestic life. Money is not sufficiently plentiful.

Many of the great families of the kingdom who still retain their titles, have been for long generations ruined by leaving the management of their vast estates to attendants, who gradually overwhelmed their masters with debts, till they became at last themselves the possessors of their properties. The frequent political revolutions at the commencement of this century, and the innumerable forfeitures which then occurred, likewise impoverished vast numbers of the nobility; and the abolition of the right of primogeniture, by the introduction of the French code, as regards inheritances, and the consequent division of property, has gradually created a titled crowd of necessitous idlers.

The innumerable Princes and Marquisses and Counts, whose sons, without limitation, all inherit their father's title, are frequently left with very slender means to support the honours of their rank. Yet those who would disdain a profession, are capable of incredibly mean acts, and of the basest expedients to maintain an outward show, to the public eye.

Many of the nobility make a regular trade of letting lodgings. One foreign family is accommodated by a Prince. To another a Count has the politeness to cede his first-floor, ready furnished; and we were one morning alarmed by the entrance of a chasseur in livery, with a sword and an enormous cocked hat and feathers, into our drawing-room, to assure us that his mistress, the Marchioness ——, was most eager to make an arrangement to let her house for two-thirds of the price she had asked to a family of our acquaintance. When she had previously shown us the apartment, we took her for the housekeeper. Yet the Marchioness kept her carriage, and so do many others, who are said to live on macaroni, and spare diet, in order to make this display.

If a family wishes to hire a good pianoforte, it can be had, even from a Duchess, for a sufficient price; and one of the Royal Princes condescends to permit wine to be sold at his gate, whilst his palace is almost entirely occupied by his friends, or, in plainer language, his creditors.

A Princess, who strains every point to go to court in her own carriage, to kiss the Queen's hand, probably maintains her family for eightpence a day, and never invites a friend to eat or drink within her doors.

But it must not therefore be supposed, that they are economical on principle, or that they fail to enjoy the pleasures of life. On the contrary, it is one of the most engrossing objects of their pursuit, and almost every means is resorted to, to obtain them, except honest labour. It is rare that what is considered pleasure in this country, does not go hand in hand with vice.

However sparing may be the ordinary diet of private households, there are times and seasons when eating appears to be the sole business of the city. The day before Christmas, the street of Toledo, St. Brigida, and all the market-places and innumerable alleys in the old part of the capital, are like one vast fair for the sale of eatables of every possible description. Garlands hang in festoons from house to house; of poul-

try and game, of vegetables and fruit, whole fabrics are erected, whilst the streets are absolutely noxious with the smell of fish of all descriptions, especially an endless variety of eels, which, living and dead, are everywhere to be seen in huge baskets for sale, or piled upon the scales to be weighed for the eager purchasers, who throng around the merchants in such dense crowds, that it is scarcely possible for a carriage to make its way through the motley assemblage.

In fact, on Christmas Day, there is an absolute rage for devouring this unfortunate fish, and very high prices are paid for a certain sea-serpent, which is brought from the coast of the Adriatic, to be stewed for the delight of Neapolitan gourmands. Turkeys and chickens stand next in favour, and either one or the other of these birds is served up for supper in every family that can afford to purchase, or has had the means to cherish and fatten one in kitchen or bed-room. Roast beef may also be procured of excellent quality, but veal and pork

are exorbitantly dear in proportion to other food. Nevertheless pigs are one of the staple commodities of the country, and there is a certain fair at the beginning of winter, when they are sold in enormous quantities for salting. It is a curious sight to see droves of them filling this extensive place of sale, waiting to be disposed of, whilst others already sold and killed, are stuck up by dozens against the walls, ready for salting, or are undergoing the process of singeing over blazing fires of straw. This, with the subsequent smoking of the hams, is all the cooking they receive; for throughout the whole of Italy, this high-flavoured food is commonly eaten raw. The pigs are of a remarkably fine race, and their flesh is so tender, that very little habit is necessary for it to become palatable to strangers in this crude state.

Frequently, when we were in the country, we saw the poor peasant going to his work in the early morning, with his black, thick little pig trotting after him, as in other countries a dog would have done. It evidently dwelt under the

same roof with him, and probably shared his bed and board, though all the while destined to be eaten by the master he thus faithfully and gratefully followed; and such, in fact, is pretty nearly the fate of the wretched peasant himself, who is merely regarded as a source of gain by those whom he humbly serves and obeys, whilst his instruction and his comforts are seldom superior to those he bestows upon his pet pig. Like it, he has the air, and the sunshine, and a sty—but, less fortunate than the animal he cherishes, he has no friend or protector to watch over his welfare, nor to succour him in hunger, misfortune, or sickness.

One great food of the peasantry is Indian corn, the flour of which they make into thin cakes, with water, which can scarcely be called bread. Salad of every species of herb likewise contributes to their nourishment, and, as a luxury, the green leaves are anointed with filthy oil. Macaroni is in universal request; it is commonly eaten with a sauce of tomatas, which are cultivated in great quantities, and boiled

down to a thick paste for winter consumption. When salted, they are likewise much eaten by the poor; whilst grapes and figs in the season are the general food of all classes; and by being left to dry upon the trees, or hung up in the houses, are preserved in abundance till the spring. Potatoes are yet, in comparison, scarcely known, and I have frequently been surprised to observe, that even in the families of the fishermen themselves, fish forms a very small article of consumption with the poor inhabitants of the sea-shore.

The salted anchovies from other ports are commonly eaten in the city and neighbourhood; but the fresh ones from the bay are never seen in any great abundance, like herring in the northern seas. In fact, though fish are from time to time carried about in baskets and plates for sale, there is nothing that can be called a general fish-market in Naples. The sheds where shell-fish are sold on the quay of St. Lucie, and the few baskets exposed in the same place, cannot be honoured by such a name.

Neither is there such a shop as that of a fishmonger to be found in the whole city.

Though the actual misery in Naples is such as to make the heart shudder to think of, yet it exists amidst the greatest abundance, and to the natives every article of provisions is exceedingly cheap; though of this, strangers who either purchase for themselves, or employ Italian servants to do so for them, can form little idea, such is the system of cheating universally carried on, to extract as much money from them as possible during their brief sojourn. Luckily for the accommodation of those who do not wish to form an establishment, nor to pay double for every thing they consume, numerous cooks carry on their profession in commodious kitchens in the best part of the town, who send out dinners ready dressed, in large baskets containing all the required dishes and a pan of charcoal to maintain their warmth, from one shilling a head to any price a gourmand may desire to pay. Boys without shoes or stockings, but adorned with a white cotton night-cap and linen apron, may be

seen running about at all hours after mid-day with these walking dinners on their heads, whilst others in the same costume assist their masters in the mysteries of the stew-pan. Women, in fact, seem to be generally banished from the Neapolitan kitchens. Families even of very moderate fortune have commonly a man-cook; and we have often found an old worn-out trumpeter or drummer who had made the Russian campaign with Napoleon, filling the treble capacity of cook, housemaid, and lacquey. Many landlords of ready-furnished apartments undertake themselves to provide a dinner for their lodgers at a fixed price; and, in fact, to dine at home in any way, we soon found was preferable to going to restaurants, which, generally speaking, are very poor places indeed.

Even the best and oldest established of these eating-rooms, frequented by the first merchants and military men of the city, is in a dirty, low, entre sol, where the concentrated smell of defunct dinners seems never to have been dispelled by a breath of air for more than half a century.

Nor are the viands of a nature to recal the appetite which this nauseous odour has put to flight, whilst the wines are abominable. A newly-established eating-house is more brilliant, but much dearer; yet even this accommodation, such as it is, is not to be found, except in the centre of the city.

Woe betide the stranger who searches in the neighbourhood of the Chiaja, or the suburb of Posilipo, for a house of entertainment. It is true there is one in the latter place, in front of a palace, by the lovely sea-shore, and commanding an unrivalled view of the city and bay, with Vesuvius rising directly in front of it.

It is a low house, of no very inviting appearance, with vines trained like a tent over the tables on the flat roof, where people eat in fine weather. But it was not fine weather when we entered it, partly from a desire to see everything it was in our power to visit, and partly over-persuaded by a friend who had passed many years in Naples, and assured us we should there find an excellent dinner. A door like a coach-house

gave us admission into the kitchen, which had no window. On a table spread with a clean cloth stood a huge turkey, and various other viands were arranged ready for the fire, at which, in the back-ground, a fat cook, in the usual white linen costume, was carrying on his profession.

We quickly made our selection, and the next point was to ascertain where we were to dine. The mistress of the house, a thin, smoke-dried old crone, with a dirty-coloured handkerchief over her dishevelled hair, and her feet thrust into the usual wooden slippers, proposed the house-top, and conducted us up a little narrow stone staircase to take a survey. But as we found the lingering remains of a shower were still dripping from the canopy of vines, we hinted we should prefer a chamber.

"There was a delightful one at our service," she said; and immediately threw open the door of a white-washed room, where, in the middle of the brick floor, stood a dirty deal table. Resolved to pursue our adventure to the end, we

were about to enter, in defiance of such uninviting appearances, when turning our heads towards two large, uncurtained beds, on the opposite side, to our utter astonishment a man with a grisly beard, and a red nightcap, suddenly sprung up in one of them. "It is only my husband," cried the old woman; "he won't disturb you, so pray walk in, it is a charming room, and my poor man has just lain down to rest a little, as he has been ill of a fever."

We listened to no more explanations, nor expostulations, but retreated to the lower story, with all possible dispatch. Here we discovered that there was another large room at the side of the kitchen, where a long table was placed for the accommodation of guests. Though it more resembled a stable than a chamber, though the wretched damp floor was of trodden earth, and the only light admitted was from the door,. we procured a couple of sacks on which to put our feet, and sat down to await with impatience the arrival of the macaroni, and the superb turkey which we had previously seen.

Though the distant parts of this den were too dark to be clearly distinguished, we perceived enough to know that all was dirt and ruin. Immediately in front of us stood a dingy screen of boards and dirty mats, behind which, from time to time, we heard the muttering of voices and laughter, and then the rustling of cautious movements. We by no means liked such invisible neighbours, and were gazing on the rude erection, anxious to penetrate the mystery it concealed, when a black old sail-cloth curtain that hung above it was suddenly pulled aside, and a huge head, with a grinning mask on its face, was thrust from behind its rude folds.

"What does all this mean?" we cried, starting from the table in consternation.

"Oh, Eccellenza!" said the woman, "it is only a theatre, where our young people amuse themselves; there is nothing to alarm you, nothing in the world!"

But we had already had enough of this horrible place of entertainment; and ordering our

dinner to be sent to a friend's house in the neighbourhood, we hurried off to demand permission to take refuge there.

It is certain the Italians are less difficult in such matters than we are; for it is by no means uncommon for both men and women of the upper classes, on their return from their meagre soirées, or the theatre, to resort to eating houses only a few shades better than the place we have described, and such as no English female, even of the middle classes, ever beheld in her own country, to eat a certain patty or cake called pizza, composed of cheese made of buffalo's milk, and anchovies and oil, which it must require a stomach of iron to digest.

In fact, habit seems to render the inhabitants of Naples insensible of dirt. In the palace, and the cottage it equally prevails; and those who pay no attention to cleanliness in their own dwellings, are not likely to require it in places of public entertainment.

Yet in Naples the cooking is excellent. It is the work of men; and the cleanest-looking per-

sons we saw during all our rambles, were the cooks with their white aprons and white night-caps, preparing, amongst their shining pans, some odoriferous meal for the English.

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